

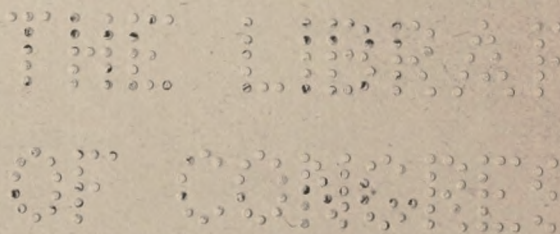


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**BY
ARTHUR BROOKE CADEN**

AN IMAGINARY STORY

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AN IMAGINARY STORY.

I.

It began this way——it was Saturday afternoon: I had finished my work on the bars, and on the chest and leg machines in the gymnasium, and was wrestling as usual with the little Irishman, before winding up my exercise with a mile run. Though I did not know his name, nor he mine, we were very good friends in an athletic way, and met nearly every afternoon, about five, in the gymnasium. We were fairly well matched, for though he was thirty pounds heavier than I was and a head shorter, I was fully as strong about the chest and arms, and was also much more active. I would nearly always get the hold and throw him, but in falling he would squirm his body around so as to land on his stomach with me on top. Then the struggle would begin. If it lasted long enough his extra weight would generally tell, and it would end by his laying me on my back. He was a good natured fellow, though, and as I have a habit of suiting myself to my company, in the six months that we had known each other we had never had a row.

This afternoon, being the last in the week, with a Sunday rest before us, we were both doing our best. I had already won one fall, and now had

him on his stomach and was waiting for an opportunity to turn him over. My attention must have wandered for a moment, for suddenly, by a heave of his shoulders, he threw me off, sprang to his knees, and grabbed me by my right hand fingers. Before I could recover myself he had twisted me around and laid me on my back with his knee on my chest. We both laughed and got up, and, after a few moments rest, took position for the last bout. I began slowly pacing around him, with my arms slightly advanced and my body bent, ready to spring in as soon as I should see an opening. I was just tightening my muscles for a jump when he sprang back crying, "Stop, stop, look at your finger."

I stopped in my spring and looked down quickly. The fore-finger of my right hand was wobbling around helplessly with each movement of my body.

"Hell," I said, "I believe it's broken," and it was; in throwing me he had snapped the bone between the knuckle and the middle joint. I looked at it and laughed ruefully.

But there was nothing to be done except to have it set as quickly as possible, so, with my Irishman, who had been pouring out a stream of profane ejaculations expressive of the sincerest sorrow, I ran to the dressing-room, and, skinning off my gymnasium suit, got under the shower-bath. When I came out in a couple of minutes he already had my locker open, and was waiting for me with a towel. I did not take much of a rub-down but

dried off as quickly as I could, and hurried into my clothes. He helped me whenever it was necessary, and in about fifteen minutes I found myself on the street.

While dressing I had made up my mind what to do. I had a friend who was house-surgeon at one of the up-town hospitals on Lexington avenue, and I would visit him. I saw a cable car coming and ran and caught it. I nearly hurt my finger again in grabbing the rail, as the gripman did not stop, though I signaled him.

On my way up-town I straightened the break as well as I could, and made a sling of my handkerchief—it was beginning to hurt like the devil. Then I lit a cigar and meditated. A more unfortunate minor accident could not have happened to me, for I was a reporter by trade, and on my writing depended my living. Five years before I had come to New York with a bundle of manuscript in my trunk, and a trunkful of ambition in my soul—I was to be a great author. Now I was twenty-six, and further off from greatness than ever. I had but little money when I started, for I had quarreled with my father, who wished me to devote myself to business, and my manuscripts would not sell. I soon had to look for work, and chose reporting, as I imagined that it had a close connection with literature. By the time I had discovered my mistake I had fallen into the routine, and was too lazy or too weak to break out of it.

My first job was with a city news-bureau, where

I received two dollars a day—which were not always forthcoming—and out of which I had to pay my carfare. Then I was promoted to four dollars a day, when I had to work from ten in the morning until one or two at night.

Toward the end of my stay with the news-bureau I was given the cream of the assignments—principally, I believe, because I always wore clean collars and cuffs, and was the only member of the staff who owned a dress suit in good repair. It was this which got me my first regular position on a newspaper. I was at the annual dinner of the Southern Society. I had written my report and sent my copy down to the office, and was enjoying myself getting full on free champagne. I knew many of the members of the society socially, for I was a southerner myself, and over the wine a strong brotherly feeling developed. In the little group in which I was sitting—for the regular dinner and speech-making was over—this was especially so. I knew all the men well except one, and he was the managing editor of one of the yellow journals. I saw that my chance had come, and seized it—before the crowd broke up I had cultivated his acquaintance so well that he had promised me a position on the city staff of his paper. He was as good as his word—though not quite sober when he gave it—and the next day I found myself regularly employed.

And now began my palmy days so far as money went. I was put on space from the beginning.

The city editor treated me well. Rarely did my bills fall below fifty dollars a week, while sometimes they reached a hundred. I laid in a store of shirts and shoes, collars and cuffs, clothes and underclothes, which stood me in good stead when the dark days came.

For the dark days came. There was one of those periodical upheavals which occur in most newspaper offices, and my friend the managing editor retired. Then there came a new city editor, and my bills began to shrink. One day my bill was so small that I expostulated, and was told that if I did not like it, why, etc., etc. I did *not* like it, so cleaned up my desk and left. I was really glad to leave, though if I had continued to make money I would probably have worked on indefinitely, despite the fact that, to a gentleman, it was a disgusting sheet to work for. It was lie, lie, lie, all the time; not such lies, of course, as would give grounds for a libel suit, but lies which could not be absolutely disproved. Everything had to be twisted into a sensation. I really grew ashamed to read my own writing, though, of course, I never failed to charge for it all in my bill.

It was six months before I got another job. It is true that, at first, I did not try very hard, as I had a little money saved up, and thought I would try my hand at fiction again, seeing that I had had so much practice, but still the old women editors of the magazines did not seem able to appreciate the value of my work. When my money got very

low I went back to the newspapers, and worked a while as a free lance. I managed to scratch along in this way, and occasionally, when I was able to get in two or three long stories in the Sunday papers, would find myself in funds again. But I spent as fast as I made, and twice had to pawn my watch. This always braced me up. I would stop drinking, lead a regular life, and save up pennies until I had taken it out again. I suppose I made enough good resolutions during this time to last an ordinary man for life. One good thing was that I took up my gymnasium work again—I had dropped it almost entirely while reporting, except a little dumb-bell exercise in the mornings before taking my bath—and began taking long Sunday walks in the country.

After six months another swing of the pendulum raised a friend of mine to the position of city editor on one of the most respectable of the afternoon papers, and he offered me a position on salary. The pay was small, but the hours were short, and I accepted the offer in order to have a certainty while devoting my spare time to special stories, and serious work on my novel. I was now twenty-five, and felt that the time to begin in earnest had come.

It sounds disgraceful to say so, but for the next whole year I did absolutely nothing. Each afternoon, between three and four, unless it rained, I would walk up-town to Twenty-third street and exercise in the gymnasium until five, then go up stairs and spend half an hour or so in the reading-

room looking over the current perdiocals. Then to supper wherever the fancy should strike me, generally to some fifty-cent table d'hote, with wine included, after which, unless I was enticed away to the theatre or elsewhere by some friend, I would return to my room, get out the MS. of my novel and pretend to work. The first preliminary would be to light my pipe and plan out what I would do when my novel was accepted and published and I was famous. This would be so interesting that it would generally take two or three pipes to work it out thoroughly, by which time it would be too late to begin work that night. Then I would generally take a last pipe on which to make good resolutions for the morrow.

Of course I was conscious all the time what a wretched creature I really was—how I was wasting my life—and many a time in fits of deep depression, after dreams more than usually brilliant the night before, was ready to commit suicide. It is the easiest way out of difficulties, if you have sufficient courage, and frequently is the only sensible course, though as long as a man has health, and is not hopelessly compromised, I think that it is unwise, for while you are alive you still have a chance, whereas when you are dead you are dead forever.

Such had been my life, and such was my mental condition on the day of the accident. When the car reached 66th street I signalled the conductor to stop, which he did. I found my friend, the house-surgeon, in his room. He was a southerner, and

a very nice fellow, and we had often played poker together. He took my accident as a matter of course, for breaks and cuts were an everyday matter to him, and even laughed a little when I told him how it occurred. He had not yet been in private practice, so had still to learn how to play the hypocrite. He congratulated me on the fact that the joint was not injured, swathed the finger in cotton, wrapped it up with cheese-cloth and plaster, and told me not to use it for a month. It was all so nice and cheerful that it did not seem to me that I was hurt at all, and it was not until I returned to my room that the seriousness of my position again impressed me. I could write a little, of course, though not without pain, by holding my pencil between my thumb and middle finger, but not fast enough to be of much use to me in reporting, for, on an afternoon paper, work must be done in a rush. Also, unfortunately, I had never learned to write on a typewriter, so my left hand was useless to me.

I thought over the future pretty seriously that evening, but could arrive at no conclusion. By good luck I had a little money, having drawn my salary that morning, and also twenty-five dollars from another paper for an article describing an unusual surgical operation. With this, besides some change left over from the previous week, I could scratch along through the month, and, if the worst came to the worst, I could again pawn my watch.

I went to bed that night in a very gloomy frame of mind, and for several hours could not sleep. Towards morning I began to doze off occasionally, to be awakened each time with a sudden start to find that I was pressing on my finger. The last time the awakening was not so sudden—it was then after daylight—as my pain had worked itself into a dream. I was a boy again, and in my old home in Galveston, and had cut my finger. I remember the incident quite well. I had bought a new knife, and was whittling a piece of wood, when it slipped and cut me. I dropped my knife and ran crying to my mother. She kissed me, as usual, then bound the finger up. This actually occurred, but in my dream the ending became distorted, for, after she had bound the finger up, her face gradually changed, until it became old and wrinkled like a witch's, then she put my finger in her mouth and began chewing on it with her toothless gums. I begged and prayed her to stop, until at last the pain became so intense that I screamed aloud. This awoke me in reality. I found that this time my hand was hanging over the side of the bed, and that the rush of blood was causing me actual agony. I did not go to sleep again, but the dream had given a direction to my thoughts, and I began to review the various accidents of my childhood. This again brought Galveston vividly before my mind, until at last a longing sprung up within me to visit my old home there once more. It was no longer mine, for, a year after my arrival

in New York, my father died—my mother had died three months before I left Galveston—leaving almost nothing except the house. I gave up my share in this to my sister, as she needed money more than I did, and she had since married and left Galveston.

At seven o'clock I got up and put the water on my oil stove to boil. Then I stepped into the closet where I kept my bath tub and took a cold plunge—holding my right hand, however, well above my head. This refreshed me considerably, though the drying off afterwards was somewhat awkward. Then I opened the hall door to get my bottle of milk which the janitor placed there every morning. By this time my water was boiling. I poured half of it on my coffee, and used the remainder to boil my eggs—my usual breakfast except when I had oatmeal for a change, for however badly I might end a day I always began it well.

All the while I had been thinking of Galveston, until by the time I had finished breakfast, dressed, and glanced through the morning papers, my mind was made up: I would visit there if it took my last cent.

It was now nine o'clock. The first thing to do was to visit my city editor. We had gradually drifted apart since his promotion, and now I did not know where he lived. There was a drug store on the corner, so I went there and looked him up in the directory. He was living on the next block. I started for his house immediately, calculating

that I would find him just finishing breakfast. I was wrong in this, however, for, the day being Sunday, he was, though awake, still luxuriating in bed. I was somewhat doubtful about my reception, for a city editor is a beast which belongs to a genus of its own. No matter what a man may have been before, once he becomes a city editor he changes—generally for the worse. I was received cordially, however, my visit being unofficial, and invited to join him in the breakfast for which he then rang. This I declined, and then explained to him the object of my call. He was really quite sympathetic, and promised to keep my position open for me until I returned.

The rest of the day I spent in packing and in making arrangements for my departure. In the afternoon I called at the shipping-news office and found that there would be a steamer for Galveston, via the Mallory Line, at 4 o'clock the next afternoon. It was an extra steamer sent out on account of the rush of freight.

Now my money was barely enough to pay my passage one way, unless I went steerage, which I had no intention of doing, so it became absolutely necessary for me to get a pass. I have found that business men at their offices are much more difficult to manage than business men at home, unless the matter be a business one, so my best chance was to see the manager of the line at his house. I looked up his address, and found that he lived on Staten Island. In the old days my father had

been a heavy shipper over the line, and I knew that he would remember my name. I took a light dinner, then started for Staten Island. It was still daylight when I reached his house, for, as I have forgotten to say, it was nearly the month of June. I found him in his garden examining some rose bushes, so did not have to send in my card. He remembered me after a moment, and we chatted a while before I broached the object of my visit.

It was difficult; very, very difficult; but before I left I had an order on the office for a round trip ticket. The next morning, to have money enough, I pawned my watch for fifty dollars and bought an imitation gold one for \$2.69, and, in the afternoon, at half past three, was on board the Leona ready to start for Galveston.

II.

This trip was uneventful, but to me was one of unalloyed delight. Years had passed since I had last had a regular holiday. I was not seasick at all. Every morning at daylight I would be on deck watching the sailors cleaning up for the day. Each sunrise would be a fresh source of pleasure, and at first I made short notes to remember the sequence of the various colors, but finally gave up in despair, as no words can describe the living gold of the sun as it first raises its edge above the horizon. My finger gave me but little pain, and seemed to be knitting well. At Key West we anchored off shore, as quarantine had been declared against it by Galveston, and nobody was allowed to visit the town. I was sorry for this as I wished to buy some cigars.

When we entered the gulf the nights became even more beautiful than before. The water was one gleaming mass of phosphorus, and, after dark, I would stand at the bow of the vessel and watch the porpoises playing around its nose. They were wonderfully active, and could cover two yards to our one. Of the passengers there were not many, but enough, with the steward, to make up a little game of poker, which netted me about twenty dollars by the time we reached Galveston. The voyage took nearly seven days. It was daylight Monday morning before we reached the jetties.

I had thought that the power to feel excitement was dead in me, but, as we neared the town, and the well remembered landmarks, began to assume definite shape, I felt something stir within me almost approaching the old time thrill. We passed the quarantine station, the hospital, the old wharf, where oftentimes I had gone crabbing, the newer wharfs lined with shipping, and at last arrived opposite to our own pier. Here the captain decided to bring the steamer around, and, as the tide was against us, it was a tedious job. I watched, for a while, the negro longshoremen swarm down to the dock to be ready to unload as soon as we should be tied up, then went to my stateroom to gather together my scattered belongings preparatory to going ashore. I donned my summer suit and the straw hat which I had bought before leaving New York, for the day promised to be warm. When I came out of my stateroom they were just lowering the gangway for the passengers to land; while below the iron doors in the side of the steamer had already been thrown open and a gang of darkies were rushing in. There were but few people on the dock to welcome us, and none to welcome me. Somehow I felt disappointed. I walked down the gang-plank, with my room steward bearing my valise, for I had tipped him liberally out of my poker winnings. Here I met my first acquaintance—the transfer-man—who greeted me by name. I shook hands with him effusively, and gave him my valise and trunk check, with instructions to

take valise and trunk to the Tremont Hotel. As I had not yet breakfasted, I strolled down Tremont street to Henry's and drank a cocktail. It was the first drink I had taken since leaving New York, except an occasional bottle of beer, as I had decided, on account of my finger, to make this a temperance trip. The cocktail braced me up, for I was feeling rather gloomy, and I ate a piece of tenderloin trout for breakfast with relish. Then I took a Market street car to the neighborhood of my old home.

From a distance it seemed to be unchanged, but, as I drew nearer, I saw that time and neglect had done their work; the yard was overgrown with weeds, the faded green shutters hung loosely on their hinges, and a huge sign "To Let" was nailed on one of the pillars of the front gallery. It was dreary, dreary, dreary. Even the old fig tree which I had so often climbed as a boy, was dead, and its gaunt, leafless branches, stood bare against the sky. The front fence was bulging outwards, the paint was gone, while the oleanders, which had once been our garden's chief beauty, looked weary, dusty and bedraggled. I turned from the place resolved never to visit it again. It made me sick at heart to look at the changes which had taken place in the last five years, and to think that the old days were gone forever.

I felt strangely old as I strolled up Market street again, and half resolved to return to New York by the next steamer. As I thought of it, I saw

that there was really no one in town whose acquaintance I cared to renew. My old friends had probably forgotten me as I had forgotten them.

At the corner of Center and Market streets I stopped and watched, for a few minutes, the people as they passed. I recognized many faces, and some of the people, as I could see by their eyes, half recognized me; but I had grown a mustache since leaving there, and in other ways also, I suppose, had changed greatly, for they passed without speaking. Mike, the old fruit man, recognized me, however, and I shook hands with him warmly, though with my left hand. Then I took a car for the beach. As we moved rapidly along, I remarked, as I had already done several times that morning, how everything had shrunk. I had, before, vaguely imagined that Galveston was a large town.

At the spot where the old Beach Hotel had once stood the car stopped and I got out. A strong breeze was blowing and the air was cool. I turned and faced the gulf. The tide was very high, and great waves were dashing against the break-water, on the top of which the cars ran. I raised my hat and bowed low; then said aloud, half mockingly, half seriously, "You, at least, old boy, have not changed."

A faint laugh sounded behind me, and I wheeled around quickly. There, standing hardly ten feet from me was a girl, the shadow of a smile still hovering on her lips. For a moment I lost my self-control and stared at her as though she were

a spirit; for, as I looked, I seemed to be seeing deep into her soul, and it was wonderfully beautiful. I took a step towards her before I recovered myself, then stopped abruptly, and, I believe, blushed. But I was more surprised when she also walked forward and held out her hand, saying, "I was sure that I recognized you—you are Graham Woodhouse."

I blessed my mother again in that moment for her firmness in having me christened Graham instead of John, for the name sounded beautifully from her lips. I tried to disengage my right arm from its sling in order to take her hand, for in my left I was still holding my hat, which I had removed when she spoke, when she noticed—which I do not think that she had done before—that I was crippled. Her expression changed quickly, "You are hurt," she said, "I am so sorry. I hope it is not serious?"

"Oh, it's nothing," I answered, "only a broken finger; but serious now because it prevents my shaking hands with you."

A slight shade of annoyance crossed her face—evidently she did not like compliments—but it passed quickly, and she spoke again in the same pleasant voice with the ring of friendliness in it: "When did you return to Galveston?"

"This morning," I answered, "I had to stop work for a while on account of this accident, and thought that I would like to take a last look at our old home here."

Somehow I was unnerved this day, for as I said the word home, a vision of our house, as I had last

seen it, rose before my mind; my voice broke, and a film of moisture passed before my eyes. I stamped my foot angrily: "You must not mind me to-day," I said, "I am not myself. I have stepped back into the past too suddenly and—and it hurts me."

A quick expression of sympathy transfigured her face, and again I looked into her soul and saw that it was beautiful. We were silent for nearly a minute, and both looked seaward, and watched the huge breakers dash themselves into foam. An electric car jangled by on the track behind us. Its passage broke the spell. She turned to me again suddenly and asked, "Where is Alice?"

The question startled me. Who was this girl who seemed to know me so well? I paused a moment before I answered and looked closely at her face. It was strangely familiar, but when or where I had known her I could not for the life of me imagine. Then I said, "Just now I don't know. She wanders around so much that I have lost track of her; but I think that she is in Europe somewhere."

She must have noticed my hesitation before answering, for she looked down while I spoke and dug three little holes in the sand with the point of her parasol; then she raised her head again and said slowly, with what sounded like a note of disappointment in her voice, "I really do not believe that you remember me at all."

Then I recognized her. But how she had changed. It did not seem possible that this radiant girl before

me could be the slim, timid child that I had known six years before. Only her eyes were the same, though even they seemed to have grown a deeper blue. I loosened my arm from the sling. "Now I must shake hands with you," I said; "I did not recognize you before, but now I do. You are Mary Andrews."

I held out my hand as I spoke, but she put both of hers behind her back and looked up at me tantalizingly, "It's too late now," she said, "too late."

I laughed and put my arm back in its sling, though I felt distinctly disappointed. I remembered now well the last time I had seen her. I was twenty then, nearly twenty-one, and she about fifteen. She was to leave shortly for boarding school, and had come to our house to spend the day with my sister. I had known her slightly before, very slightly, as in those days I had a great idea of my own dignity, and was ashamed to go with little girls for fear that people might consider me young. But this day, for some reason, I exerted myself to please her. There were only us three to lunch, for my mother was not well, and we had a delightful time. We spent all the afternoon together, and I read her one of my stories. She thought it beautiful—I belonged to the romantic school then. In fact, I believe that under the admiring sympathy of two young girls—for my sister also believed in me—I told them about the career I had planned, and how I was to be a great author. And then, towards dark, I walked home

with her, and I remember that she, also, told me many of her dreams. Near her house we came to a broad gutter with the wooden crossing under water, for it had rained heavily during a part of the afternoon, and I lifted her in my arms and carried her across. She half protested as I raised her up, but afterwards lay quite still, and I noticed what a beautiful blue her eyes were, and thought about kissing her, but did not. I wondered now if she remembered that evening.

Almost as if in answer to my thought, she said, "Can you remember the last time you saw me?"

"Perfectly," I answered, "I saved your shoes from getting wet."

"Do you remember that?" she cried, and then from the edge of the ribbon round her neck, to the oval of her cheeks, she blushed a beautiful crimson.

I looked at her and smiled. "Don't," she said, and she pressed her lips closely together as if to force the color down, "if you laugh at me now I will be angry."

"I don't want to laugh," I answered: "there is nothing to laugh about. I only smiled because you blushed."

"It is a stupid habit of mine. I try to stop it, but I can't; though I don't blush now as much as I used to."

"It is a very becoming habit," I remarked. She frowned slightly. "Don't pay compliments, please,

I hate them. Now, how long are you going to be in town?"

"Two weeks," I answered without hesitation, for in that moment I had changed my mind about leaving, and would have added, if it had not been for her warning, "because I have met you," but did not.

"Then you must come and see me—let me see—" she thought a moment—"come to-morrow afternoon at four. And now good-by;" she held out her hand, but withdrew it quickly, "Oh, I forgot," she said. Then she gave me a dazzling smile, and stepped into a car that was waiting. It started almost instantly. Mechanically I raised my left hand to my head to remove my hat and bid her good-by, when I found that I was still holding it in my hand and that I had been standing bare-headed during our entire conversation.

Honestly, I was fazed. I stood blankly staring at the rapidly disappearing car until it whirled around the corner of 25th Street. Then I took a car myself to the hotel and registered. It was now about eleven. I got a very fair room on the third floor for \$17.50 per week. I tried to work the newspaper racket, but it would not go. I arranged myself as comfortably as I could by the window, lit a cigar and thought. Mary Andrews puzzled me. I had heard absolutely nothing about her in six years, and really had forgotten her existence, until our sudden meeting this morning. Now, I admit,

she interested me, and I determined to accept her invitation to call. I did not know where she was living now, so, as a first preliminary, it was necessary to find this out. After lunch—a poor one—I went down town. It was beastly hot and very few people were on the streets. I strolled around aimlessly for a while, looking to see somebody whom I knew; but everybody seemed to be in doors. Finally, however, the name of an old chum of mine on a lawyer's sign caught my eye, and I went up-stairs to the room indicated to see if it was really he. It was: I found him in his shirt-sleeves fanning himself and fighting mosquitoes. He recognized me almost instantly, and soon we were deep in old times. Gradually I brought the conversation round to the present social condition of Galveston, and ultimately to Miss Andrews. She had been out three years, he said, and was now acknowledged to be the queen of the town. Her father had grown rich suddenly a year after I had left through a land boom, and was now reported to be worth over a million. She had had dozens of offers, but so far had never been even gossiped about as engaged. A young man named Ewing, whose father was the richest man in town, was now paying her attention, and it was generally supposed that she would finally end by marrying him, as there was no one else with a long enough pocket-book to make the running against him. They were living now in a house on Tremont Street, near Broadway, which was considered to be the handsomest in town.

I stayed in Howland's office a couple of hours and then took a walk along Tremont Street. Here a livery stable caught my eye and an idea occurred to me. I was feeling very restless from lack of exercise, and, as it was too hot to walk, a horseback ride would be just the thing. It was a crazy thought for a man with an arm in a sling, but it seemed quite rational then, so I went in and looked at the horses. I had ridden but very little since I had lived in New York, though once I had been a very good rider. But I was disappointed as there was not a single decent riding horse in the stable. This, together with the heat, put me in a very bad humor, and, as I rode out to the beach again in a street car, I changed my mind about staying and decided to return by the next steamer.

But the cool breeze from the gulf calmed me down, and later, when I had dined at one of the restaurants, lighted my cigar and taken a comfortable seat on the gallery where I could watch the crowd, I was sorry that I could not stay a month.

The next morning I went down to the offices of the company and exchanged my ticket, and arranged to sail on the steamer leaving Saturday week. Then, having nothing to do until the afternoon, I went to Howland's office. He was not fighting mosquitoes this time, but was practicing on his type-writer. Business was very dull, he said, as all the courts were closed. We talked for a while, then went into a rear room, which served him as a bedroom, and played a game of chess, leaving the door

open, however, to watch for possible clients. He beat me, for I was out of practice, though from his game I judged myself to be the better player. Then I went back to the hotel and loafed around until lunch. After lunch I went to my room, undressed, hauled the bed to the window, through which a strong breeze was blowing, put down the mosquito-bar, and read until three. Then I took a sponge bath, dressed in the coolest clothes I had, with a belt in lieu of a waistcoat, and, at just four, rang the bell of Miss Andrew's father's house. It was a pretentious place, in hideous taste, and I felt vaguely angry with her for living in it. A negro boy in buttons opened the door and took my hat and cane. He grinned so pleasantly when I handed him my card that it warmed my heart to look at him. He showed me into the drawing-room, and then went to advise his mistress. It was quite dark, though all the windows were open, as, besides the Venetian blinds which were turned downwards to exclude the light, there were wire nettings fitted into the window frames to keep out the mosquitoes. I was still looking round the room, before seating myself, when Miss Andrews entered. She was dressed in some loosely hanging sort of white thing with open sleeves—a tea gown, possibly—and looked like the picture of some angel, though her face had more expression than angels' faces generally wear. She took my hand this time, my right hand, and clasped it lightly, though, as it was covered with a black silk handkerchief, I hardly felt her touch. We sat

down near one of the windows, and she asked me about my sister Alice and I told her what I knew. She kept her eyes fixed on me while I was speaking, and seemed to be studying me, for presently she said, "You have changed greatly, I wonder now that I recognized you yesterday."

"Hardly as much as you have," I answered, "for I did not recognize you at all; and I fear that our changes have been in opposite directions, for I have deteriorated while you have improved."

She laughed slightly, "I would not be too sure of that," she said, "for you do not know me at all."

And this was true. As we talked I became vaguely conscious that the woman before me was not the same as the girl of yesterday—the sympathy between us was gone. Even her voice was not always natural, and before I left it became clear to me that the narrow life she had been leading for the past few years, with no other society than that of the half-educated young men of a small town, had been slowly smothering her true nature. But she was beautiful, though, and wonderfully attractive, and once or twice, in response to some remark of mine, her real self would flash forth for an instant. It was this which caused me to retain my interest in her—to see if I could not penetrate thoroughly through the hide which conventionality had wrapped around her.

The next evening I saw her at the Garten Verein dancing with a tall, smooth-faced young fellow, rather stout, and not bad looking at first sight, but

with a stingy expression, whom Howland, who had accompanied me, told me was Ewing. On general principles I disliked him immediately. I also saw her sister—a blurred image of her in which the soul had never entered—and her brother, a conceited young man with eye-glasses and a blonde mustache. Howland introduced me to them both, and also to a number of other men and girls, and I spent a very pleasant evening, though I did not get a chance to say a word to Mary Andrews. She gave me a nice smile once, however, when we passed each other on one of the paths—she walking with Ewing, and I with a girl whose name was Miss Kate Wallace.

Thursday I saw her driving on the beach with a man I did not know, and Friday I met her on a boat sail. She was again with Ewing. Saturday, in the morning, I met her down town—she was shopping. I joined her, and we had some ice-cream together. She told me that I could call the next evening late, if I wished, and to out-stay the other men.

She really had her admirers beautifully trained, for when, about ten, she called me to her side with a glance, they all dutifully left. Then we went into the dining-room and had supper together. This night she was charming, and we talked until nearly twelve. She told me about her life since the evening that I carried her across the raging gutter and something of her day-dreams; while I, in return, told her such parts of my life as could safely be repeated. We parted such close friends that I was entirely unprepared the next afternoon to have her pass me on

the beach—I was driving with Miss Wallace, my Garten Verein friend, and on whom I had called the previous Thursday with Howland; and she with Ewing—and pretend not to see me, leaving me with a frozen smile on my face, the reins between my keens, and my one well hand rigidly grasping the brim of my hat. Miss Wallace laughed, “That’s Mary,” she said, “she must like you very much.”

“She takes a peculiar method of showing it then,” I answered, “and I don’t think that she will ever have another opportunity.” I really meant this at the time, and Wednesday at the Garten Verein—I was again with Miss Wallace—I would not look at her, though twice, while dancing, she looked towards the spot where I was sitting.

But when Friday came—my last day—my resolution went to the winds. I had to see Miss Andrews again. I wrote her several long letters for practice, and then sent the following note:

“Dear Miss Andrews:—

“My steamer leaves to-morrow at daylight, and I must go on board to-night; may I see you before I go to say good-by?”

In about half an hour I received her answer. I was almost afraid to open it; but I did, and this is what I read:

“Dear Mr. Woodhouse:—

“We are going bathing this evening, and will be pleased to see you if you care to join us afterwards.

“Sincerely,

“Mary Andrews.”

It was not what might be called a pressing invitation; but it gave me the permission I wished, which was, after all, the main thing. I was very busy the remainder of the day packing, and saying good-by to my different acquaintances. I called on Miss Wallace in the afternoon, for we had become very good friends, and she clasped her hands and pretended to weep, when I told her that I was really going the next day. Then I returned to the hotel, sent my things down to the steamer, and paid my bill. It left me with \$25.00 in notes, and a little loose change. Where the rest had gone I don't know, for I had spent absolutely nothing on myself—possibly on candy and flowers, certainly not on drinks, for, except this day, I had not taken half a dozen during my entire stay in Galveston. I say except this day, for, during the afternoon, I had begun drinking; not heavily, but enough to make me feel it.

At half past six, as I was about to go in to dinner, it suddenly occurred to me that Miss Andrews' evening might, in the southern way, mean afternoon, in which case, if I dined, I might miss her. I immediately abandoned all idea of dinner, hurried down stairs to the saloon, took a pretty stiff toddy, ate some cheese and crackers and took a car to the bathing house, which was almost opposite Tremont Street. I went to the desk and asked the clerk if the Andrews family had been there yet. He replied that he had not seen them that season. This knocked me out completely. It had not even oc-

curred to me before that they would go to any other place; but now I saw that there was every reason for their not going there, but to one of the more quiet places along the beach, for the crowd at the Pagoda was generally pretty badly mixed. There were two other large bathing-houses—one at the foot of 25th Street and the other at the foot of 21st—besides a number of small bath-houses on wheels, each capable of holding but a single person. I decided on these. There was a long row of them near 26th Street, and another long row in the opposite direction—probably about 20th Street. I chose the 26th Street ones. For safety, however, I stopped, in passing, at the large bath-house on 25th Street, but they were not there. As I neared the small bath-houses, I looked seaward, between intervals of dodging carriages and buggies, and saw that some eight or ten of them had been rolled down to the edge of the surf; but the tide was low, and the bathers themselves were too far out to be distinguished. I turned towards one of the houses rolled back from the shore, and which appeared to be the office, to make inquiries. A lady, who had been sitting on a camp stool near the door, started up as I approached and said half questioningly, and, as it seemed to me, almost timidly, “Mr. Woodhouse?”

I recognized her instantly as Mary's mother, though I had never seen her before. She was a slender woman, not very tall, and her face bore traces of former beauty; but it was a very sad face, and showed plainly that years of hardship, or some

great sorrow, had almost broken her spirit. I raised my hat and said in my nicest voice, "Mrs. Andrews, isn't it?"

She smiled assent and we shook hands, I with my left, and she said nervously, "Mary remembered after she had answered your note that she had not told you which bathing place we were going to, and as there are so many she was afraid that you might miss the right one, so I promised to stay here and when you passed to speak to you and let you know accidentally—" she stopped abruptly, and a most comical look of horror passed over her face. "What have I done," she cried, "Mary will kill me. You were not to be told." And then she laughed, and her face changed as if by magic, and became young again. I laughed with her, for her words had made me suddenly light-hearted, and in that instant we became friends. I brought out another stool and sat down beside her. At first we talked about indifferent things, and her embarrassed manner began to return, then I got her to talk about Mary and her interest revived. Soon I did not have to say anything, but just listen. She lived only in Mary: you could feel it in her voice. She told me many things about her that interested me greatly; some of which I knew would make her daughter wild to have told; but she was absolutely unconscious. I do not suppose that she had ever met a more perfect listener, for I was not only interested in her talk, but was a trained interviewer besides. We both grew so absorbed toward the end that we did not see that the

bathers had returned to their houses, and it was not until the first bath-house came lumbering in that we realized how time had passed. I began to puzzle now, as one after another the houses were lined up back of us, in which one was Mary. I did not like to ask, so amused myself by imagining. I finally selected a neat looking house with the words, "Use Tutt's Little Liver Pills," painted in large black letters on its side. I do not think that I connected Mary anyway in my mind with Tutt's Little Liver Pills, but somehow I was certain that she was in it. I was wrong, however, for it was the first house to open its door, and out of it came Mr. Andrews. I had seen him once or twice before on the street, but had never been introduced, so Mrs. Andrews now presented me to him. He was a fairly tall, bony-looking man, with a short mustache and beard, both thickly streaked with grey. His face had been cast in a rough mould, and spoke hardness in every line. I could understand now, as I looked at him, why his wife's spirit seemed broken. He was apparently trying to be genial this evening, however, and spoke to me pleasantly about my father; but geniality did not sit naturally on him, and I got a truer insight into his character a few minutes later when he was settling for the baths, for he was insisting, rather angrily, on the bath-house keeper charging for but one bath when two people occupied the same room. How he finally settled it I don't know, for others of the party began to come out and I ceased listening. There were more than I had

anticipated, for, besides Mr. Andrews, there was the son Walter, Mary, her sister, a still younger sister, a friend of hers, two boys of sixteen or seventeen, Ewing, and a good natured sort of fellow named McManus. I knew them all except the kids. Mary and Ellen, the middle sister, were the last to appear. It amused me, after what her mother had told me, to have Mary greet me with studied indifference, and then turn to talk to Ewing, between whom and myself a natural antipathy was beginning to develop. It angered me also, and I determined that the first advances would have to come from her.

I was much relieved when we boarded a Garten Verein car, to learn that we were to take supper at the Garten, for, by this time, I was beginning to feel very hungry. Arriving there I found that a table had been prepared for us under the trees, and that a cold supper was already spread out. We all sat down, I with Mrs. Andrews on my right and the youngest sister on my left. Mr. Andrews sat at the head of the table. Next to him on the opposite side was Ellen, and then McManus, the other little girl and one of the boys, and Mary and Ewing. On my side next to Bessie, the youngest sister, was the other boy and the son Walter. The instant we sat down a constraint fell upon us. Nobody seemed able to talk. We ate our food silently. Bessie and her friend exchanged an occasional giggle across the table, but were too much embarrassed by my presence to say a word aloud. Mary and Ewing spoke together now and then in a low voice, as did Ellen

and McManus, but it could hardly be called conversation. Mrs. Andrews had shrunk into herself, Walter and his father were absorbed in eating, and I—I who had counted on this evening all day—was in one of the most disagreeable positions of my life. I had intended to shine, and instead my light was fading.

For the effects of the drinks that I had taken during the afternoon were now beginning to wear off, and I felt myself sinking into a stupid state and hovering on the ragged edge of sleep. If I could leave the table for a minute and get another drink I knew from experience that I would be all right, but this I could not do without exciting comment. Again and again my eyelids drifted downwards, but I forced them up each time by a terrific exertion of will. Fortunately my face was in shadow, and no one was watching me closely enough to discover my real condition. Conversation would have helped me, but as I have said there was none.

How it would have finally ended I don't know; I would, I suppose, have struggled through, though I was approaching so near to the limit of my powers that I was thinking of jabbing my knife in my hand accidentally in order to have an excuse to leave the table, when I noticed, as Mrs. Andrews raised her glass to her lips to take a drink of water, that it was empty. She looked round for the waiter, but he had gone inside. My chance had come. I took the glass from her quickly and rose from my seat, bracing myself for a final effort:

"I will bring you some water," I said.

"Oh, don't trouble yourself," she exclaimed, "the waiter will be here in an instant."

"It is none at all," I answered with perfect truthfulness, and then hurried away before she could reply.

At the bar of the club house, which was some fifty yards distant, I ordered a whiskey and gulped it down quickly, and then leaving the glass to be filled with ice-water, rushed to the toilet room and bathed my face well with water.

When I returned I took another drink of whiskey, and then, with my glass of ice-water, hurried back to the table where the others were sitting. Mrs. Andrews thanked me very nicely, and seemed quite grateful: she was evidently not accustomed to small attentions. I certainly did not deserve gratitude this time, though I would have done the same thing if the case had been different. The relief I now felt was enormous, and my spirits rose. The last whiskey had put me on edge. I was not in the least drunk, but all the recklessness of my character was rising in me, and I was ready for anything from pitch and toss to manslaughter.

The conversation round the table was still languishing, so I decided to start it going. It was a hard crowd to work on, but I had handled worse before, and knew that if I could once get an opening, my own spirits would affect them. I started with Bessie, very, very gently, until I got her talking, then I brought in Mrs. Andrews, and presently Mr. Andrews. Soon

McManus fell into line, and later, Ellen. She was already beginning to dislike me, but this night I conquered her. The two boys and the other girl were easy victims, and even Walter joined in. Only Mary and Ewing held off. Their own private conversation had died out, and Ewing was leaning back sullenly in his chair. But the others were entirely mine, and I played with them as a showman might with his puppets. At first the conversation rested entirely in my hands, and I had a stock of stories and anecdotes which had born the brunt of many a lurid evening, and which, expurgated, would do for any crowd; but it did not suit my purpose to be the only speaker, so when I got them moving I shifted the ball from one to another, and only held the strings. Whenever I could I got in a shot at Mary, which only she could understand, and I could see that I was making her angry, which gave me considerable pleasure.

We must have stayed at table nearly an hour. It was not until the waiter brought the bill that we thought of rising. Mr. Andrews glanced over it carefully, but did not dispute an item; he even gave the waiter half a dollar. Then Mrs. Andrews suggested home. But the children would not hear of this, and began playing a game of tag, in which everybody, gradually, joined, except Mr. and Mrs. Andrews and myself. We watched them quietly for a few minutes; then Mary, who was "it" ran up to her mother, and, touching her lightly on the arm, said "Tag."

Mrs. Andrews turned quickly and touched me, "Tag," she said.

"That's not fair," I exclaimed, "I'm a cripple." She started to answer me, but Mary interposed, "Cripple," she said scornfully, "I don't believe you've been hurt at all. You should say that you consider tag too childish a game for you to take part in."

It was a most unexpected attack, and such an unjust one, that my anger against her, which had been smouldering all the evening, blazed up fiercely, and all my scruples about risking my finger flew to the winds. I turned to Ewing, who had drawn near while we were talking, and said, "Start, I am going to catch you."

He accepted it as the challenge which it was meant to be, and moved away slowly as I walked towards him. In an instant Mary was at my side. "Don't, Mr. Woodhouse," she cried, "please don't; I did not mean what I said at all."

I only looked at her. My anger was at a white heat now and must have shown in my eyes, for she stopped suddenly as if I had struck her; and I, without a word, started after Ewing, who had now commenced running. He was far more active than I thought—I learnt afterwards that he had been for a while at college, though he had never graduated, and had had some athletics drummed into him—and for fifty yards I did not gain an inch. Then he began tiring, and I crept up. The path we were on ran in a curve to the dancing

pavilion, and was probably a hundred and fifty yards. Before we reached the end of it I was within a few feet of him, and gaining rapidly. Then he dodged. I tried to dodge also, but my arm being still in a sling, hampered me, and I slipped and nearly fell. Before I recovered myself he was ten yards away, and running to where we had left the rest of the party. I gained on him again rapidly, and caught up with him when we were within twenty feet of the others. I stretched out my hand to touch him, when he caught a tree with his right hand and swung around it. Again I lost ground, but I was now between him and the crowd and was chasing him away. For a few yards we continued in a straight line over the lawn, but he had now discovered my weakness, and at the next tree he came to he swung around it and made straight for the spot where Mary was standing. The table, at which we had taken supper, was between them.

Everybody was now taking an interest in our race, and the younger children were shouting out words of encouragement to me, for Ewing did not seem to be a favorite with them. I was still four or five yards behind him. If I killed myself I was going to catch him. I knew he would dodge again as soon as he reached the table. If I tried to follow him I would lose. There was but one thing to do: I must jump the table. It was a dangerous jump, for, besides being more than usually high, it was fully five feet wide. But my mind was

made up. As we neared the table he, as I expected, swerved to the left, and prepared to grab the corner with his right hand and swing himself around. I did not swerve, but made straight for the center. He caught the edge, almost upsetting it, and stopped himself on the other side within ten feet of Mary. I had only been a few feet behind when he first swerved, and now, as he turned the second corner, I rose to clear the table. I was over it before he could move. I could have prevented what followed, though to the others it looked like an accident, and that I was only trying to save myself; for as we were about to strike, I put out my left hand and grabbed him by the collar, and then, stiffening my arm suddenly, transferred my momentum to him and drove him to the ground. He landed heavily with me on top. I was up almost instantly, and helped him to his feet, meanwhile apologizing. He did not take my apologies very kindly, however, for he was too raging to speak—indeed, it seemed as if I had transferred all my anger to him also, for, though badly winded, I once more felt calm and pleasant and at peace with all the world.

Looking at the matter from his standpoint, however, I can hardly blame him for being angry, for I had gripped him so hard that I had torn open his collar and the front of his shirt, while his face had gathered up a quantity of dirt and his nose was bleeding. He was immediately surrounded by all the party and great sympathy was expressed.

I rather expected him to fight, and I think that there would have been one, notwithstanding the presence of the ladies, if Mr. Andrews and McManus had not led him away to the club-house before he fully realized what had happened. The others now gathered up their belongings preparatory to leaving, and I joined Mary. I was feeling a little frightened, now that the excitement was over, and it was with a very humble voice that I asked, as I stood beside her, "Am I to walk home with you?"

She looked downwards for nearly a minute before she answered, then, still looking downwards, said, "I would not have had this happen for anything, and the hard part for me is that I feel that I am to blame."

She paused for another distinct interval, then, suddenly raising her head and looking me straight in the eyes, she asked, "Did you do that on purpose?"

I felt like saying "No," and might have if she had been somebody else, though I really dislike lies and am annoyed every time policy forces me to tell one; but with her looking at me in that way it was out of the question, so I answered, "It was not exactly on purpose; when I sprang to clear the table my only thought was to catch him before he reached you; when I saw that we had to strike, I tried to make the blow as hard as I could."

She gave a little half sigh as if of relief, "I am glad, at least, that you have told me the truth," she said; "I felt from the first that something serious would happen. It is fortunate that it is no worse—"

she paused a moment—"I never saw such a look in a man's eyes as I did in yours. I know, now, how a devil can look when he is torturing some poor soul."

"Thanks," I remarked.

She looked up at me with one of her quick smiles; "I don't really mean to say that," she said, "but you frightened me, and—and then you know that the devil is not really as black as he is painted." She stopped again, and swung the little hand bag in which she carried, I suppose, her powder and brushes, "Yes, you are to walk home with me," she said finally, "I told Mr. Ewing that I had an engagement with you. We may as well start now. But, oh, how angry I am with you. If it were not that you are going away tomorrow, and that I shall never see you again, I would not speak to you for a month."

I did not think it advisable to make any answer to this, but took her satchel from her and started with her towards the gate. It was a beautiful night, and, as we passed out of the glare of the electric lights, we could see the moon racing through the clouds overhead. We did not talk much on our way home, though we must have walked very slowly, for when we reached the house we found that the others had already arrived and gone inside.

It had been altogether a most unsatisfactory evening. I had said nothing that I had intended to say, and though I had downed Ewing, I had done it at the cost of making her angry. All my beautiful plans had come to naught. Several times I tried to give the conversation a turn in the direction I

wished it to take, but she had not responded. Her will was braced against mine, and I was out of spirits now, and had not the strength to oppose it. There seemed to be nothing to do except to say good bye, so, after lingering a moment, I raised my hat and held out my hand.

"Good bye," she said; I repeated the words and turned. The moon was flooding us with light. I looked at it a moment before I walked away. Though I could not see her, I could feel that she had not moved. I turned again, "Why don't you go in?" I asked.

"I think I have as much right to look at the moon as you have," she answered, with a little laugh. I stepped back to the gate quickly. "Miss Andrews," I said, "say something kind to me before I go. You don't know how much I have counted on this evening. It seems to me that it is a turning point in my life. Since I have met you everything has changed. No woman I have ever known has influenced me as you have. If I leave now without a word from you to help me I can see my future clearly. It will be but a repetition of my past:—good resolutions and bad actions."

I paused, while she leaned on the gate and swung her hat idly. Suddenly she looked up, and I saw that her eyes were flashing. "Do you want to know what I really think of you," she said, "I think that if any man ever merited contempt, it is you. Do you remember that day at your old home? How you told us two children your plans: I believed

in you then. But what have you done with your life since? You have told me enough—you have wasted it absolutely. You are very clever—I have never met a more clever man—but you have no principle—you are lazy and weak—and now you tell me that you need my aid to help you. A man who has not strength enough to raise himself through his own will is beneath contempt.” Then she turned and walked towards the house.

I stood for an instant longer by the gate, then slowly walked towards the center of the town. Her attack was so sudden that it left me without a reply—if there was a reply. I do not think that I was angry; I do not think that I was sorry; for the moment my feelings were numbed. At Henry’s I stopped. A number of men I knew were in there. Somebody asked me to take a drink and I took it. Then somebody proposed shaking dice and I joined in. We talked and laughed and they wished me a pleasant voyage. I was with them a couple of hours. I drank a great deal, but it did not effect me. I separated from them about one, and continued on my way to the steamer, on board of which I had decided to pass the night. But at Market street I changed my mind and went to a little variety theatre on the corner of 25th street. The place was full. The performance was over, but the women beer-drinkers were dancing for the price of a drink. They were the usual crowd: painted, short skirted, dissipated. I took one and danced with her, then

treated her to beer. We had several beers together, but I felt no real interest in her and soon left.

It was about two when I reached the steamer. There was still activity below, where the longshoremen were loading freight; but the stateroom deck was almost deserted. After wandering around some time I finally found a sleepy waiter, and ordered a bottle of whiskey. With this, a glass, and some cigars, I moved to the hurricane deck. I sat down and began to think. The mosquitoes were bad, though after I lit my cigar they did not bother me so much. It was still a beautiful night, but the clouds were gathering, and it looked like rain. For over an hour I drank my whiskey slowly and smoked before the outlines of my plan began to take shape in my mind. Mary's words had pierced me deeply—deeply, because I felt that they were nearly true. I was not quite so much to blame as she thought, but almost so. I *had* wasted my opportunities. Dawn came before I had fully made up my mind. In one thing she was entirely right—the man who has not enough strength to raise himself by his own will is beneath contempt. But there was one point that she had overlooked: Did I really care enough for success to go through the trouble necessary to obtain it. This time I decided that I did, and that I had the will to keep my resolution. The signs of the coming day grew stronger. The bustle below increased. Bright tints appeared on the eastern horizon. When the edge of the sun should

rise above the waters I would stop smoking and drinking and all my vices until I saw Mary again. I lit another cigar and filled my glass with whiskey. I sipped the latter slowly as I watched for the critical moment. It seemed a very long time coming. Suddenly a streak of gold appeared below the dark line of clouds, and I threw my bottle and cigar overboard, and went down to my cabin.

III.

When I awoke we were at sea, and the rain was pouring down heavily. It took me some time to realize my position. When I came on deck the gong was sounding for dinner. I felt a certain gladness to which I had been a stranger for many a day. Sunday I took the plaster from my finger. It had knitted well, and though it pained me some for the next few days, and puffed up like a boiled sausage, by the time we reached New York it was almost as strong as ever. I went to work immediately, and for nearly six months toiled harder than I had ever done in my life. Stopping smoking was the hardest of all. For the first month I was miserable, and it interfered greatly with my work; but gradually the lost feeling wore away, and my health became better than ever before. I could also work longer.

Shortly after my arrival I bought a typewriter on the installment plan, and devoted myself resolutely to learn it. At first it seemed a hopeless task, but after some weeks I was able to strike the keys mechanically, and then it became a pleasure. As soon as I was out of debt I began to save, and to watch my money grow was another source of satisfaction. It did not grow very fast, but it grew steadily. I was making twenty or thirty dollars a week, over and above my salary, by writing special stories for the Sunday papers—the magazines, however, still refused to print me.

During this time I often and often thought of Mary. Indeed, I had to make a resolution not to think of her until after I had finished my work. She seemed to twist herself into everything. I do not know when it was that I finally acknowledged to myself that I was in love with her, but it was long before the cold weather came. She was the mainspring of my life. And she helped me, too; for, of course, I had my days of depression—especially after some story that I had based great hopes upon came back from the magazines—I would think that I was fighting for her, and it would give me courage to begin again.

I am afraid that I gradually grew to idealize Mary. I had noticed when I was in Galveston that she had faults like other women, but these I forgot now; she became to me something of a vision steadily beckoning me onward.

On the first of December the longing to see her again became too strong to be resisted. I had all along indefinitely decided to see her on Christmas, and now I arranged my plans so as to do so in reality. I had six hundred dollars, nearly, for I had been making money more rapidly towards the end and spending almost nothing, and this, with care, would give me six months in Galveston. I had long planned a novel, and would write it there.

I worked until the 20th of December, then resigned my position on the paper. I had already told my friend, the city editor, that I would prob-

ably go some days before. The next day, the 21st, I took the train. I carried my typewriter with me, and such of my belongings as I thought that I might need; the remainder I put in storage. For three days I was en route, and more restless than I had ever been since I can remember; but at last the journey came to an end, and on the morning of the 24th of December I found myself again in Galveston. Once more there was nobody to meet me, as I had written nobody that I was coming.

My first step on arrival was to look up Howland. I had decided, if possible, to take a room in the same building that he was in. I found him as friendly as ever, and the room business was arranged without difficulty—one adjoining his, with the use of his office at night, if I needed it. We had no chance to talk during the morning, as he was finishing up some papers to file before the holidays. I spent the time unpacking my trunks and arranging my room. About noon his work was over, and we took a stroll on the streets. They were crowded, but we saw none of our immediate circle, except a few of the men. We took lunch together at one of the restaurants on Market street, and while eating this I gathered up such items of news as were interesting to me. Not much had happened, Howland said, since his last letter—we had corresponded intermittently—nobody had married and nobody of any importance had died. The season of dances and opened the month before and promised to

be very gay. There had been two Germans already this week, and Miss Wallace was to give one this night. I was immediately interested. I had been wondering how I was going to meet Mary, as I was afraid to call without first obtaining her permission. I had heard nothing from her directly since I had been away, except once when I sent her a book; but her letter of thanks then had been so formal that I had not deemed it advisable to write to her again. If she was going to this German it would give me the opportunity I wanted. Now that I had plenty of time I determined to make my advances with great caution. She was going, for Howland said he that had an engagement to take her.

"The deuce you have," I remarked, "I thought you told me when I was here last summer that you were not chums."

"Oh, we're not, particularly," he answered, "it's only a little by-play. She's using me to keep Ewing in order." He paused a moment to finish his soup, then continued, "She is one of the cleverest girls in town and the biggest flirt. I know that she does not give a rap for me, but she has been encouraging me outrageously for the last few months, and I'm supposed to be Ewing's rival. I am only second best, however, as I know very well, for I have not money enough to make the running against him."

I suppose all men hate to see the clay of which their idol is made brought roughly into view, and

Howland's cold-blooded words hurt me; but I have pretty good control over the outward expression of my feelings, so merely said, "Well, what do you submit to it for?"

"Oh, I don't know; it don't make much difference. I can't help liking her some in spite of it, and the house is a very pleasant one to call at, and then"—he laughed lightly—"it helps me to keep somebody else in order. By the by," he continued, after a moment occupied in breaking off and eating the claw of a soft-shell crab, "you had better go to Miss Wallace's to-night; there will be no trouble about the invitation."

I was aware of this, and had already decided to ask her for one. From the restaurant we returned to his rooms, and from there telephoned to Miss Wallace. Howland called her up, but when he told her that I was in town, she asked to speak with me, and we talked for quite a while. The invitation to her house that night she gave me without my even hinting for it. During the afternoon I bought a few cheap things that I would need; a cot, washstand and pitcher, and a chair—my bedding I had brought with me—and a bureau; and then, later in the afternoon, I went to the Chess and Whist club with Howland. He got me a ticket for a month, and also put up my name as a member. We played a game of chess together, and I beat him badly. We played another which I also won. He shoved the men together and looked at me critically: "What have you been

doing with yourself?" he asked finally. "You are looking better than I have ever seen you. Ah, I have it, you've stopped smoking. It did not seem natural to see you without a cigar in your mouth."

"Yes," I answered, "I've reformed." And then, suddenly, as I spoke the words, the wildest longing to smoke came over me. I remembered that my resolution was only until I saw Mary again. And I was to see her this evening. I had thought that I had stopped forever, but now I knew that I had only held off through the strength of my will, and that the devil was still strong within me.

We took supper together that evening in the same restaurant where we had dined, and where, it seemed, Howland always took his meals. I decided to board there also. He ordered what he pleased, and they gave him twenty per cent discount on the list prices at the end of the month. At this meal he ordered a bottle of wine, and was much surprised when I refused to join him. "I suppose you'll say that you have given up women, too," he remarked scornfully, "seeing that you have become so virtuous."

"I have," I answered.

He laughed jeeringly. "And how long are these noble resolutions going to last?"

"They are going to last as long as I say they shall."

"Really? Well, anyhow you have my sympathy.

I wish I could stop smoking. It is horribly expensive."

After supper we returned to our rooms to dress for the evening. About half-past eight Howland left me—dances begin early in Galveston—and a little later I also started for Miss Wallace's. Nearly everybody had arrived when I reached there, and the rooms were well filled. I left my overcoat and hat in the men's dressing-room, and got a program. When I went downstairs again, dancing had already begun. I did not see Mary at first, but after I had worked my way into the second drawing-room, I saw her standing in a little alcove, the center of a crowd of men. She looked in her ball-dress even more beautiful than my memory of her. I did not know how she would receive me, but walked towards her boldly. She smiled, however, as I approached, and when I reached her side gave me her hand. "See what I have done for you," she said, "Mr. Howland told me that you were coming, so I have saved you a dance. Are you not obliged?" and she handed me her program, which was attached to her fan.

"You are kind as always," I answered, and I took the fan and program. It was filled already, except one dance, which was marked with a cross. "This one?" I asked. She nodded, and I wrote my name. "How very nice it is," I said, as I handed her back her program, "to see you again." She smiled and said, "Thank you." Then some-

body else claimed her attention, and I withdrew.

I fairly writhed mentally with rage. Such boobyish, inane, idiotic conversation at our first meeting since that night. And yet I was not to blame. The girl had me hypnotized. The speech I had planned to make to her deserted me as I looked into her eyes, and my blood turned to ice in my veins.

With gloom in my heart and a smile on my face I made my way back through the rooms, greeting as I went those of my past summer's acquaintances who remembered me. Presently, across the room, I saw Miss Wallace, and walked over to speak to her. She welcomed me far more cordially than Miss Andrews had, and let me take two dances, scratching out some of the other men's names to do so, for her program was already full. From her I turned to the others, and soon had as many dances as I cared for; the part after supper I left blank.

The German progressed as Germans do. I danced and distributed my favors between Miss Wallace and Miss Andrews, and was favored once by each of them. Mary danced divinely. She asked me a few questions about myself while we were together, but we did not talk much. I was still too disgusted with my previous failure to indulge in any more inanities, and a favor figure in a German is not a good place for serious conversation. I decided to wait until our dance came. It was the next to the last on the program before

supper. The previous dance I happened to have disengaged, and immediately that the music stopped I joined Mary, who had been dancing with Howland. After a minute or two he excused himself, and at last I found myself alone with her. We took a seat on the stairs, about half way up, in a quiet corner formed by the bend and half hidden by ferns. At first people were constantly passing, and we talked about indifferent things; then the music began for the next figure, and, with the exception of one couple lower down, everybody went inside. Mary, also, rose from her seat, but I begged her to sit the dance out, and, after a moment's hesitation, she consented, and once more took her place beside me.

How it began I don't know, but presently I found myself reproaching her for the coldness of her greeting to me, and she replying that she thought that she had done even more than her part in saving me a dance. And then I lost my head: "A dance!" I exclaimed, "a dance and a few commonplaces after six month's absence: when I had come all the way from New York to see you."

She pressed her lips closely together for an instant before she answered, then she said coldly, "And what did you expect?"

I should have taken the warning, but I did not. All my wise resolutions flew to the winds; in an instant I was telling her the history of my life since I had last seen her. At first she listened

coldly, but presently she began to grow restless and to twist her handkerchief in her hands. Suddenly she stopped me. "Please do not say any more," she said, "I can't listen to you."

"But why?" I asked.

"Because," she hesitated, "because it would not be right." She started to rise. I laid my hand on her arm. "Miss Andrews," I cried, "please, please don't go until I have finished. I know you do not care for me now, but to me you have become everything. Since that night I have done nothing without asking myself first whether it would meet your approval. Let me try, won't you, to see if I cannot make you like me in return. I do not ask for an answer now; I had no intention of speaking when I came here to-night; the words broke forth in spite of me; but——"

"Stop," she cried, and this time I could see that she was trembling, "I cannot listen to you."

"But why?" I again asked.

"Because," the color slowly rose to her face, but she forced it down, "because I am engaged to Mr. Ewing." She stopped for a moment, then continued "It has only been since yesterday. Nobody knows it yet. Our engagement will not be announced until after Lent. You will please not speak of it. And now take me to the dressing-room."

I said nothing—there was nothing to say—the bottom had fallen from my world. I arose and offered her my arm, and we walked up-stairs together. At the door of the dressing-room she left me. "You

need not wait." she said. I bowed and turned away. The door of the men's dressing-room was open. I walked inside. There were two decanters on the table. I picked one up indifferently and filled a glass and drank it. It was sherry. It seemed perfectly natural to do so. I filled another glass. Presently some men came in and one of them began quickly to change his collar. The music had stopped playing. Mechanically I felt my own collar and found that it was damp. I got the extra collar I had brought from my overcoat pocket and changed my own. Then I took another glass of sherry and walked down stairs. At the foot I found Miss Wallace. My next dance was with her. I joined her and presently the music began. I threw off the numb feeling which had come over me after Mary's words, and tried to act as if nothing had happened, determined to leave immediately after the dance was finished. But here an unexpected obstacle presented itself. It seemed that the man who was to take her to supper had been compelled to leave early in the evening, and that she had decided, knowing that I had brought nobody, to allow me to take his place. Under other circumstances I would have been pleased, but now it seriously interfered with my plans. I felt that I wanted to go out and get drunk. Only in that way could I get a clear idea of my feelings. But there was no help for it, so I expressed my pleasure, and after the dance was over we started for the dining-room, which had

been arranged up-stairs. On the way we were constantly stopped by girls and men who wished to tell Miss Wallace what a good time they were having, so nearly everybody had passed us before we reached the top of the stairs. We looked around for a table. At first there seemed to be none vacant, but presently we saw one in a corner at which only two people were sitting. By order of the fate which was controlling my destiny this night they proved to be Mary and Howland.

"What luck," cried Miss Wallace, and I had no recourse but to move over there with her. We took the vacant seats, and the two girls began a rapid conversation in which Howland joined, and they all laughed over some incident which had occurred the last time they had been together.

At first, for the life of me, I could not talk; though Mary behaved very well, and spoke to me several times as though nothing had happened. Presently the waiter filled our glasses with wine, and Howland thoughtfully told him to leave the bottle. I drained my glass immediately. Both Mary and Howland looked at me, and the latter spoke: "Well," he said, "I thought you told me to-day at dinner that you had stopped drinking."

"I did," I answered, "but circumstances have now caused me to change my mind; I am thinking of returning to New York to-morrow."

"To New York to-morrow," cried both Howland and Miss Wallace.

"Yes," I answered, though, to tell the truth, the idea had only occurred to me as I had begun speaking. Mary gave me a quick glance, but I could not tell by it whether she was glad or sorry. "But what has that got to do with your drinking?" continued Howland.

"Years ago, when you were young and at college," I answered, "you may have read that it was the custom among some of the ancients—the Persians, I believe—to debate all serious questions both sober and under the influence of wine. I approve of that custom. By it you are enabled to view a question from two distinct standpoints: then afterwards, when neither unduly depressed nor elated, you can compare the two and shape your actions accordingly." Why I said this I don't know. The wine, I suppose, was already affecting me, for, after six months total abstinence, it does not take much to go to a man's head. A reckless fit now siezed me, and for the remainder of the supper I took the lead in the conversation so shaping it as to bring the subject of mercenary marriages to the fore and losing no opportunity of driving a shaft into Mary.

When supper was over I joined the crowd in the men's dressing-room and lit a cigar. A few minutes later I put on my overcoat and left the house. It was quite cold outside, for a norther had blown up during the evening. I turned up the collar of my coat and walked towards the beach.

I really did not know what to do. To think connectedly was impossible. On reaching the end of the street I looked out over the water. There was a piece of the moon, with the clouds racing over it; but neither it nor the surf brought me any inspiration. I only stayed there a few minutes, then turned and walked homewards. As I passed Miss Wallace's house again the brilliant lights made me feel lonely, and I paused a moment on the corner half decided to go in. Then I looked down the street and saw on another corner, a block away, the glimmer of different lights—lights showing dimly through red curtains. I remembered the house instantly, though I had not been in it for years. It was Cora's house of prostitution. I wondered if she still ran it. I walked towards it and looked at the outside for a moment. This was sufficiently reassuring, so I decided to go in, resolving to invent some excuse in case I had made a mistake. Opening the gate, I mounted the steps and rang the bell. There was a movement of feet inside, then a little trapdoor was opened, and through it a negro woman peered at me. Apparently her inspection was satisfactory, for almost immediately a chain was unfastened and the door thrown open. I entered and it was closed after me immediately. The hall was dimly lighted, but presently another door was opened and the place was flooded with light. In the doorway stood a large, middle-aged woman, dressed in a low-cut ball dress, whom I

recognized as Cora. She did not seem to have aged a day.

"Come in, dear," she said, "while I call some of the ladies."

I entered the room, while she stood at the foot of the stairs and called out rapidly the names of several women; then she came inside and sat down. "It is growing cold," she said, "but we have a good fire; won't you take off your coat?"

I told her No, that I had only come in for a moment to look around as I had not been in the place for several years.

"I saw that you were a stranger," she remarked, and then added that she knew most of the Galveston boys. I answered something, then one after another four or five women came in. They were of the ordinary type, and dressed like the proprietor. One of them came and sat on my lap and asked me if I did not want to go up-stairs and have a good time. I told her No. It was all so well remembered; so brutally realistic; that I hated myself for coming—still, as a matter of form, I put my arm around the woman's waist and ordered a bottle of wine.

"It has been a very quiet Christmas Eve," said Miss Cora; "one of the quietest that I remember to have seen in Galveston," and she rang the bell for the waiter to bring the wine. We talked along for a while. The wine came and was drunk, and then another bottle, and afterwards another. I did not pay much attention. I hardly saw the

women around me. My thoughts were busy with my conversation with Mary. Should I give her up? take my defeat before I had really had a chance to try? or stay and fight out the battle to the end? The wine I could feel was going to my head and tingling through my body. It was so long since I had drunk that I could not stand as much as I once could. It seemed that it would be cowardly for me to go away now; that I would deserve my defeat if I gave up without a struggle; that it could not be possible that when a man strove for something with all his might—something in which his whole heart was engaged—that he could fail. “I will fight it out to the end,” I said at last, mentally, and then I ordered another bottle of wine. The lights seemed dim to me, the gas jets were wabbling around the room, the women became blurs. It seemed to me that we were singing; that I was dancing; that more wine came. Then the lights grew dimmer, dimmer, dimmer; then they gradually rose again. I tried to shut them out, but they forced themselves in through my eyelids. I could feel them everywhere. Then I tried to open my eyes, but a great weight was pressing on them. But I struggled and struggled until at last I forced the lids apart and saw that a streak of sunshine was coming in through a hole in the window curtain. I turned around. I was in bed. It was Christmas morning. By my side was the body of a woman. I leaned over and looked at her. She was very fat and her loose hair was straggling over

the pillow. It was of a champagne yellow. Her mouth was open and she was puffing for breath audibly. Her face was bloated from last night's drinks, and the paint was rubbed off in streaks. Ugh! what disgust I felt. How horribly drunk I must have been to choose such a woman for a bed-fellow. I wondered if I had kissed her. I slipped out of bed and began putting on my clothes as quickly as I could and as silently; but she heard me and opened her sleepy, bloodshot eyes and looked at me stupidly. It was a moment or two before she regained her senses sufficiently to remember me. Then she said sleepily, "What, are you going, dear?"

I answered that I was, and she rolled over and went to sleep again. I judged from this that I had probably paid her the night before. In a few minutes I was dressed. Down stairs another negro woman than the one of the night before let me out by the back way, and I found myself in the alley. There were no hacks in this part of town, so I had to walk. It was bitterly cold, and so, fortunately, there were but few people on the street. The freezing air braced me somewhat after a few minutes; but I was still feeling very rocky. At Henry's I stopped to get a cocktail. I told the barkeeper to make it strong, which he did. Then I felt in my pocket for money to pay him. In the outside pockets of my overcoat there was nothing, so I had to unbutton it. I put my hand in the pocket of my dress-suit where I generally

kept some change, but it was also empty. Then in the inside pocket of my vest, where, the evening before, I had placed a hundred dollars, having transferred it from my day vest. There was nothing in it. A little shiver passed through me, and I saw the truth in an instant; but I still hoped against hope, and went through all my pockets again; but they were as empty as before. I had blown in every cent I had with me in my last night's drunk. One-fifth of my entire capital gone—for my railroad trip, and other expenses, had reduced my capital to about five hundred dollars. I had now left exactly four hundred dollars in New York exchange, with possibly a few loose dollars in some of my other clothes. It was a pretty hard knock. I took another cocktail, then told the barkeeper that I had no change with me, but that, if he wished, I would leave my watch with him as security. He said that it would be all right, however, so I thanked him and returned to my room.

It was a little past nine, when I entered, and I found Howland already up and dressing. He looked at me critically, but had the decency not to say a word. So my first twenty-four hours in Galveston were passed.

IV.

It is hardly necessary to go into the details of the next three or four weeks, for my debate, *a la Persian*, continued all that time. I saw Mary occasionally, but my actions that night at supper had angered her, and she treated me very coldly. I could not call on her, of course, and though we were meeting frequently, no chance to redeem myself offered.

About the only nice girl I went with was Miss Wallace. She was really very attractive, and I grew to like her more each day. She was almost as pretty as Mary, though in a different way. Frequently, in the mornings, when it was not too cold, we took long walks on the beach.

But I was not in the least in love with her—Mary occupied all my thoughts—or most of them—except when I was playing chess, whist or poker.

For my life soon drifted into a routine; one day the sample of all. In the morning I would get up about nine, swing my Indian clubs for a few minutes, take a tub-bath, shave and dress. About ten I would go to breakfast, taking a couple of cocktails on the way. After breakfast I would return to the room to smoke, and pretend to work. At twelve I would go out and loaf on Market street, between Tremont and Center, until one. At this hour most of the men were out and I would listen to the gossip of the day. We generally congregated

in front of the restaurant, between 22nd and Tremont streets where Howland and I took our meals. Our rooms were just above. Returning again to my room, I would read or write until three, when I would go to dinner. I wrote a great deal, principally letters to Mary which I never sent, but burnt up immediately; though some few I preserved. Howland used to think I was writing on my novel. He was still paying attention to Mary, not knowing of her engagement, and through him I continued posted about her doings.

After dinner I would go to the Chess and Whist club, and here my day really began. There were always enough men present to get up a game of chess or whist—generally there would be two or three tables going. We would play for small stakes, fifty cents or a dollar a corner, and I would generally win. At half past six or seven this crowd would go home, and the poker players would begin to drop in. At seven or half past the poker game would start. Unless I was going calling, or there was some dance I would always take a hand. Dances I never missed, as this was my only chance of seeing Mary. If I went calling or to the theatre, I would return to the club afterwards and take a hand in the poker game. The early evening game was always a dollar limit, but after twelve we would raise it to two-fifty, and sometimes to five dollars. There were two or three men who generally dropped in at this hour, and they would take the places of the early evening men whose wives would not

let them stay out later than eleven. If there was no late evening game I would generally go to Cora's and spend an hour or two with the women.

From the time of my arrival at the club I would be drinking steadily, though I was very careful not to get drunk again; or better, it seemed impossible for me to take enough to affect my head. The first indication that I would have that I was full, would be, on getting up, to notice that my legs were desirous of wobbling, when I would instantly start for home. Some time during the course of the evening I would eat supper, having it sent in to me at the club; or if, at a party, I would take it there.

For a man of a certain character this kind of life might be pleasant enough, but I lived it principally to keep myself from thinking, and never do I remember having been more unhappy. Sometimes, in spite of myself, I would get to thinking, especially after a heavy loss at poker, or a more than ordinary cold meeting with Mary, and then my thoughts were such that even now it hurts me to recall them.

That the end was coming rapidly, and that it would be serious, I could see easily enough, but I did not care much. My one hope lay in remaining in Galveston, and remain I would until the end. To go would mean certain defeat. A very serious point was my money. Two or three bad nights could clean me out completely. I was spending at the rate of fifteen or twenty dollars a day, and

though I was winning more than I lost, my capital was steadily decreasing.

Towards the end of January, for some reason which I could not understand, Mary showed a decided change in her actions towards me. At a German on the 25th she favored me, and we danced together for the first time since Miss Wallace's party. I held myself well in hand, and was as careful as though she had been made of glass. The next day I received an invitation to a party which was to be given by her mother on the 31st. The intervening Sunday I called at her house rather late. Ewing was there, but he left almost as soon as I came in. He managed to avoid greeting me, which was, by the by, a custom of his whenever it was possible. There were several other men present, but they, also, left early, and at half past nine I was alone with Mary for the first time in a month. It is true that Ellen and some of her friends were in the adjoining room, but they were out of ear shot, so did not count. Never had Mary been so gracious. It was after eleven when I left. We talked about everything, except ourselves. Indeed, we both seemed equally desirous of avoiding personalities. I noticed that she was not as gay as usual, and that her face, when in repose, looked tired. My own health had been so good when I reached Galveston that as yet the life I had been leading had had no bad effect upon it. Mary noticed this and complimented me—sarcastically, I suppose—on my healthy appearance. This was

the nearest she came to alluding to my half proposal to her.

At her German on the 31st she let me put down my name on her program for two dances, and she also favored me once, as I did her. Ewing looked awfully black while we were dancing together. She was nicer to me than ever, and I exerted myself to be agreeable, just as if she were a new girl on whom I was desirous of making a favorable impression. I think, towards the end, my line of conduct puzzled her.

After supper, while in the dressing-room, I met her brother Walter. Lately, for her sake, I had been trying to cultivate him, though it was hard work, as we had hardly an interest in common, except, possibly, chess. I had been told that he played a very good game. This night we began to discuss the various openings, and it finally ended in my inviting him to dine with me the following Sunday and to play a game of chess afterwards.

The next day, Friday, I awoke rather late, and did not breakfast until after twelve. In the afternoon I grew very restless, so instead of going to the club, I hired a horse from a livery stable I had discovered, where occasionally you could secure a decent animal, and took a long ride on the beach. At first I rode eastward, but later I turned and rode towards the Denver Resurvey. I had nearly reached the Orphan Asylum—the town I had left some miles behind—when I noticed a woman on horseback coming towards me, and whom I recognized

almost instantly as Mary. I had known that she rode often, but this was the first time that I had met her. When we reached each other, I wheeled my horse around and joined her. She had recognized me at the same time that I had recognized her, I suppose, for she showed no signs of surprise on seeing me. She expressed surprise in words, though, and then we fell a talking. Our horses dropped into a walk. I shall never forget that afternoon, though I can hardly remember a word we said. We seemed once more to be in perfect sympathy, and a feeling of peace that I had been a stranger to for many a day stole over me. It was growing dark when we reached her home. I helped her down, and my nerves thrilled, as they always did, when she touched me. She invited me in, but I had to refuse; I had an engagement with a Miss Morgan—a stupid girl, but who entertained a great deal, and whom I cultivated for that reason—for the theatre.

After the theatre I dropped in at the club. There was the usual crowd. I did not feel like playing, but habit is strong, and before I knew it I was drawing to my hand. It was a disastrous night, and before the game broke up I was a hundred dollars behind. Saturday night was almost equally bad, and Sunday morning I awoke with less than a hundred dollars in the world.

My engagement with Walter Andrews was for two o'clock, and at that hour he called for me at my rooms. I had invited Howland to join us,

but he had an engagement elsewhere. I had given my waiter orders to have a nice dinner prepared, and he had carried them out well. I had taken the precaution of buying the wine myself. I did not know whether Andrews drank, as I had never met him in any of the saloons; but he finished his bottle all right. After the coffee we had some cognac, and then went to the club. There were quite a number of members present, but most of them were playing whist, or looking on, so we had no difficulty in securing a chess table. It was so much the custom of the club to bet, that I asked Andrews if he cared to play for anything, but he said no, so we played for fun. He played a hard, close game, much stronger than I expected. When we were about half through he had slightly the stronger position, and one of the onlookers—the Professor, we called him—who would bet on anything, offered to back Andrews. I accepted and we played for a dollar a game. What for one reason or another—that I was feeling disgusted with myself—the critical position my losses at poker had placed me in—I played badly, and towards the end of the game went to pieces completely. I lost the game and then another. I then offered the professor to increase the stakes to five dollars. He accepted, and then, much to my surprise, Andrews offered to bet also. I took both bets. Andrews action confirmed me in my opinion of him. While he thought the game was doubtful he had not cared to risk his money; but now that he felt convinced

that he could beat me, he was willing to bet. I now played with more care, and after a long game, drove a pawn to the king's row and won. I ordered the drinks, and leaned back in my chair, thinking that I had had enough chess for one day. It was a little after five and growing dark. A cold rain had blown up, probably the beginning of a norther. I had thought of going calling, but the rain caused me to change my mind, and I proposed a game of whist. But Andrews was dissatisfied over the last game and wanted another. I agreed, though unwillingly, and we started. He was growing excited, however, and before a dozen moves had been made, he lost a piece through a bad combination, giving me the game after a few more moves. We had another drink, and again I proposed stopping. He still insisted on playing, however, and we began again. The professor did not bet this time. He had sized up how things were going, and was too old a sport not to know when he had enough. This time Andrews played much better, but towards the end of the game he again made a bad play which cost him the game. I now insisted on stopping, not, I admit, through any regard for him, but because he was Mary's brother. The professor had ordered another sound of drinks—we were all taking long toddies—and Andrews gulped his down angrily. "You want to stop because you are ahead," he said, "but I don't want to stop. You won the last game by accident. If you are not afraid I will play you for fifty dollars."

I saw that I had made an enemy of him, if he had not been one already, and that I might as well be hung for an ox as a sheep; so without more words I began setting up the men. He had a big roll of money with him; he paid me the fifteen dollars he had lost, and handed a fifty dollar bill to the professor to act as stake holder. I had one fifty dollar bill left, and this I also handed to the professor. I hated to put it up, as I could not afford to lose. Fortunately all my bills had been paid to the end of the month.

That morning I had, on counting my money, made up my mind to turn over a new leaf. By stopping all kinds of dissipation I could hold out for three months longer, and by that time my fate would be decided. Now, if I lost, I would have to pawn my watch. I was heartily sick of the life I had been leading, and now that Mary was friends with me again, was ready to lead the life of an anchorite. Still, just now there was no help, so I began playing as well as I knew how. The game had hardly begun before I noticed that Andrews was getting drunk. His eyes were shining, and two red spots had appeared on his sallow cheekbones. I turned to the professor, "Don't you think" I said, "that we had better call this game off?"

He understood my meaning immediately, and was about to speak, when Andrews interrupted fiercely "God damn it," he cried, "you either play this game out or I will take the stakes."

The professor shrugged his shoulders, "Finish

the game," he said. I was angry enough to fight, but controlled myself and continued playing. Andrews' outburst seemed to have sobered him for the moment, and he begun playing a very strong game; but he was no match for me and I won. I now left the table. The mischief was done, and at least I was about seventy-five dollars better off than when I started, or, to be exact, seventy-three. In the rear room a poker game was just starting, and I decided to play off the odd twenty-three dollars. Win or lose it should be the last game of poker that I would play until Mary was married.

There were three other men at the table when I sat down. The janitor was counting out the chips. We always made him cashier. He knew the financial standing of every man in town better than half the bankers. We all started out with ten dollars. The first hand had not been dealt before Andrews and the professor came in. They both took seats at the table and asked for cards. The other players looked at Andrews with surprise—the professor was one of the habitués—but said nothing and the game began. Somebody, I forget who now, took the seventh seat. From the start both Andrews and I began winning. The game we played was perpetual Jacks, with a bit ante and a dollar limit. Everybody had to put up a bit, and it took jacks or better to open. After an hour I was thirty dollars ahead. I then ordered supper, letting a couple of rounds of deals pass me to have time to eat properly. When I began again my

luck had changed, and for over an hour I hardly got a hand that was worth coming in on. But I knew enough of poker to know when to stay out, and though I did not win, I hardly lost anything. Andrews also began to lose, and he lost very rapidly. By the way he bet you could see that he knew nothing about poker. He was still drinking, though not very much, and seemed to be growing more sober. An outsider would not have known that he was in the least drunk. During the course of the next hour all his winnings and the chips he had started with originally, disappeared, and he had to buy a fresh supply. Once, to break the monotony, I bluffed, and won a good pot; it happened to be against Andrews. It made him very angry, and thereafter, every time I came in he would play against me. At eleven o'clock three of the original players dropped out, and two others came in. We raised the limit to two-fifty. There were now playing the Professor, Andrews, myself, two cotton buyers—one of whom was an Englishman—and a veteran poker player whom, and by right, we called the Colonel. They were all experts, except the Englishman and Andrews, who, to all of them except myself, was still an unknown quantity, though they were rapidly beginning to size him up.

We had hardly started at the two-fifty limit before the cards began to run my way, and for the next hour I have never had such luck. I was drinking only sherry and egg—a drink on which I could last

all night. After twelve my luck fell off a little, though I still won more than I lost. Andrews was getting deeper and deeper in the hole, and his hand was constantly going into his pocket and bringing out more money. I had given up even guessing how much he was losing, though I knew that it was getting to be a considerable sum of money.

I now wanted to draw out, but there is such a strong prejudice against a winner jumping the game, that I continued. At one o'clock the Colonel withdrew—that was his regular hour. He was a little ahead, though not much; I was the only large winner. This left us five in the game. A Jew, however, who had been looking on, and one of the leading city officials, both among the hardest poker players in town, came in, and our number was again raised to seven. The limit went up to five dollars. By half past one the Englishman was cleaned out, and he left. Andrews was still losing. I was about two hundred and fifty dollars ahead. The others, except the Professor, who had begun winning on the five dollar game, were about even or a trifle losers. I now announced that I was going to stop at two o'clock. Two o'clock came, but I did not stop; we were in the middle of an exciting Jack. Half past two, and I was four hundred dollars ahead; with my winnings at chess, and what I had in my pocket on entering the club that afternoon, about five hundred and fifty dollars—more money than I had had on coming

to Galveston. My spirits rose. This was my last game. I had had a valuable lesson and fortunately had come out even in the end. Mary was changing towards me, and I was sure that now that I was obtaining opportunities to talk to her that I could win against Ewing. The cards were dealt. I skinned my hand carelessly, and saw that I had four little hearts and a spade. I passed—I was sitting next to the dealer—and the next man, but the third opened it. Andrews came in and the Professor, and then the Jew, who was also the dealer. I was playing in such luck, and my position justifying it, I came in also. To my surprise, the city official, who had passed before, came in and raised the pot five dollars. The opener saw it and so did Andrews, the Professor dropped out, but the Jew and I came in. This made over sixty dollars in the pot, as we had all, before the opening, antied twice around, fifty cents each time.

We all now called for cards. I asked for one, and the city official for one, the opener and Andrews three each, and the Jew for one. I tipped up the edge of my card and saw that I had made my flush. The opener bet a seed. Andrews hesitated, I saw that his hands were trembling, then he put up his seed—fifty cents—and raised the bet five dollars. The Jew shuffled his cards for a moment, then threw them on the table. He had evidently not filled his hand. A call was all I wanted, so I merely put up my five-fifty. You could never tell what the city official had until he laid down

his hand, though I was hardly surprised when he raised. The opener now dropped out, but Andrews raised back. I gave a last look at my hand before throwing it down, as I was convinced that one, if not both of them had me beaten. I shifted the cards slowly sideways, just exposing the numbers on the corners, and then—it needed all my self-control to keep from making an exclamation, for I had filled an interior straight to my flush, and now had the two combined. For the first time in a game of poker I held a straight flush. There they were, all hearts, five—six—seven—eight—nine. I had to look at the full face of each card before I would trust my eyes. Then I raised Andrews. I would not have done so, had I not feared that the city official was only bluffing, and that I would only get a show-down. But he was not bluffing. He saw the raise and was about to raise again, when Andrews, who had lost all self-control, re-raised him before he had put his money down. The city official quietly threw his hand down, withdrew his money, and remarked to Andrews, in a painfully clear voice, “Well, you *are* an ass.”

I, however, accepted Andrews’ raise, and raised him back again. All his money was now on the table, but he went into his pocket and drew out a twenty dollar bill. “I raise you,” he said.

I was angry with him over the chess game, and his conduct while we had been playing poker had not tended to make me less so; but I was so certain that I had him beaten, and he was so surely Mary’s

brother, that I thought that I would make a last effort to be friends. "Don't raise me," I said, "I am certain that I have you beaten: call."

He looked at me and all the meanness in his nature showed in his eyes as he answered, "Will you kindly do me the favor to mind your own business?"

My last spark of pity for him died out. I knew that I had him beaten, and I determined to make him pay for his lesson as dearly as possible. He had drawn three cards, and it was almost a certainty that he could not have better than fours at the highest. I moved my cards in my hand as if I were doubtful whether to call or not, then I raised him. He raised again. I raised back. Again he went into his pockets, but this time no money came out. He looked anxiously around the table, then turned to the opener, a cotton-buyer. "Let me have five hundred dollars," he said.

The man was visibly embarrassed. He kept his account with the bank of which Andrews' father was president, as I learned afterwards. Finally he said, "I would let you have the money with pleasure, Mr. Andrews, but I have not that much with me."

I laughed lightly, and filliped the edges of my cards with my finger. The action made Andrews almost wild. He turned to the cotton man again.

"How much have you?" he demanded.

The other shifted in his seat. "I will give you what I have," he said, finally, "but I think that

you had better not bet. Mr. Woodhouse has told you that he has you beaten and has advised you to call. You had better take his advice." One or two of the other men now advised him the same way, but he had passed the point where a man listens to reason. Turning in his seat he looked the cotton man, who was sitting next to him, full in the face. "Do I understand you to say that you refuse?" he asked.

The latter did not reply immediately, but opened his vest and took out a small package of bills from the inside pocket. They were all of large denominations. He counted them and there was three hundred and twenty dollars. He handed them over to Andrews. "You have put the matter in such a way that I cannot refuse," he said, gravely, "so I give you what I have. You will please write me out a check, Lee"; and he turned to the janitor, "Bring me a check-book."

The check-book was brought, the amount filled in, and Andrews signed. The cotton man folded the check and put it in his pocket-book. Then he got up from the table, and put on his overcoat. "I still advise you not to bet, Mr. Andrews," he said, then he left the room.

Andrews fumbled the money nervously. You could see that he was wildly excited. The possibility flashed on me that he might, by some fool combination have held up an ace and a king of the same color, as some fools do, and caught a royal straight flush. As the hand had been played this

was almost an impossibility—with a good player an impossibility—but he was capable of it. But still I was going to see it through; he should have to call me if I put up every cent.

The betting began again with a sight and a raise each time—ten dollars—and so continued until we each had put up another hundred dollars. The excitement around the table was intense. Nobody had seen my hand as I had kept my cards closely pressed together since the time I had first examined them carefully, and I do not think that anybody had seen Andrews'.

After the first hundred dollars were up, there was a pause. I had decided not to say another word. If any proposition came it would have to come from Andrews. And now he made one. "I will make you one more bet," he said, in a voice which he tried to make calm, but which vibrated with emotion, "for the rest of the money I have here."

"I take you," I said, "only you must call me; or, if you wish, we will both lay down our hands at the same time."

"Very well," he said, "count out your money;" and he shoved forward on the table that which remained in front of him.

As I had won, I had placed the large bills in my pocket; now I took out four fifty dollar bills, which, with what I had still on the table, was more than enough to cover his bet. There was a moment of silence, then we both laid down our

hands. Everybody leaned forward, and there was an almost universal exclamation of "Hell!"

The Professor was the first to speak. "Four aces against a straight flush," he said, slowly, "who ever saw it."

Andrews leaned forward as if to take the money; "By God! I've beaten you at last," he said.

"Beat! you damn fool, you mean you're beaten," cried the Professor, "Don't you see that he has a straight flush?"

"A straight flush?" repeated Andrews, stupidly, "a straight flush; we did not say anything about playing straight flushes. Four aces beat everything, and I have won the money."

The Jew laughed. "You ain't got no business to play poker," he said "they oughtn't t'have let you into the game."

To end the argument I now began to gather in the stakes. At this Andrews lost his head completely. He reached out and made a grab at my hand, crying at the same time, "Damn you, you shan't have my money."

The Professor siezed him. "Stop, you fool," he cried. "Do you want to disgrace yourself? Woodhouse has won the money fairly—more than fairly, for he warned you not to bet. If you ever want to play poker with gentlemen again, you must learn to take your losses quietly. You had better get out now and go to bed."

This attack seemed to daze Andrews. He looked around the table for sympathy, but every man

was against him. He drew back his hand and sank into his seat. I have never seen a more wretched, crushed-looking creature. I was affected in spite of myself. I gathered up the chips and separated them into colors, and the bills into piles. What with the money we had both put in, there was about eight hundred dollars on the table. When I had finished counting, I took the last three hundred and twenty dollars we had bet, and separated it from the rest.

"Mr. Andrews," I said, "I don't think that you will find a single man at this table who will not tell you that I have a perfect right to this money, and you can probably afford to lose better than anyone here present; but as you lost it through your ignorance of the game, I will give it back to you," and I held the money out towards him.

But he shoved my hand back and sprang to his feet; "No, I'll be damned if I take it," he cried, "Either you give me back every cent I've lost to-night, or I will have you arrested to-morrow for gambling. There is a law in this town against gambling, and this is nothing but a damned gambling club."

If there had been a shadow of sympathy for him in the breast of anyone present, it was gone now. In an instant every man was on his feet, and for a moment it looked as if it would go hard with him; but the city official quietly took him by the arm, gave him his overcoat, and led him to the door, and my last game of poker was over.

V.

The next morning I awoke late. About half past eleven, as I was finishing shaving, Howland came into my room. He looked at me critically, until I laid down my razor, then he said, with his usual sarcastic inflection, "Well, you *have* done for yourself now."

"Yes," I answered, "how so?"

"You need not pretend ignorance, it's all over town."

"How sad," I replied.

"It's nothing to joke about, my boy," he continued more gravely, everybody is talking about your poker game last night."

"What did you hear?" I demanded, as I finished drying my face.

He looked me all over before he continued, "You take it pretty coolly," he said, finally, "but I tell you again it is no joke. You are accused of getting Walter Andrews drunk and doing him out of six hundred dollars."

I turned to him now, as I fastened my collar, and asked, "Who told you that?"

"Graham," he said, and then I knew that he was moved, for he never called me by my first name unless he was very serious, "there is an ugly charge being made against you. I only heard it a few minutes ago, and I started home immediately to tell you about it. I do not believe it—I give

you my word that I did not believe it from the first, but what I have told you every man is repeating, and some are threatening to get up a crowd to run you out of town."

I looked at him now; he was in dead earnest. "Go on," I said.

"We were to have an oyster roast to-day, as you know, and were to meet at the Andrews'. I got there a little late and found that the party was off. Ewing, McManus, and several of the other men were just leaving. Ewing told me the story, which he said he had received from Mr. Andrews. About four o'clock this morning Walter had come home. He had opened the door with his latch key, but in trying to go up-stairs, had fallen and knocked over the night lamp, nearly setting fire to the house. Mr. Andrews heard the noise, and came down stairs in time to put out the fire and rescue Walter. The whole house, of course, was immediately aroused and Walter had to explain. He had gone down town at about half past one, he said, and had gone to the bank, as his father had requested him, and had opened the private safe and taken out six hundred dollars to give to his mother to pay some bills the next morning, his father having forgotten to bring the money home the night before. He had then gone to your room, having an engagement with you to play chess, and you had dined together. At dinner you had forced him to drink, and after dinner had given him some cordial which had gone

to his head immediately. After that he did not remember anything until about three o'clock in the morning, when he found that he had been playing poker; that all his money was on the table, and that you were claiming that you had won it from him on the last hand. He protested, but you refused to give him any satisfaction, and that then he left you and came home.

"After they had got him to bed, he grew very sick, and they had to send for a doctor. Mr. Andrews thinks that you must have given him some drug. Just before I reached the house he had gone down town to have you arrested. I am surprised that nobody has been here yet."

I listened to this tissue of lies without saying a word. When Howand finished I laughed. "The dirty little puppy," I said, "nearly every word of his story is false. I had nothing to do with his coming into the poker game. I wanted him to go home long before. But I would like you to hear exactly what happened from somebody else. The Professor was present from the beginning; ask him, or old Col. Wilson, or the Chief of Police; he was in the game when it ended. I think that Mr. Andrews will change his mind about having me arrested when he hears the whole story. Then there's Bogart, the cotton-buyer, Walter gave him a check for over three hundred dollars. Everybody told him to quit. Do me the favor to see some of these men, and then contradict the whole story."

Howland grabbed me by the hand; "Graham, old boy," he said, "I'm awfully glad. I knew that the story could not be true; but I could not help fearing that you might be in some way to blame. But you had better tell me exactly how it happened, so that I can contradict it immediately."

So I told Howland the history of the day before. When I had finished he shook my hand again. "God, I'm glad," he said, "but what an unmitigated son of a bitch Walter is—no, I won't say that, though outside of Mary and her mother, it's true of the whole family. I've always disliked Walter, and I've never had much use for Ellen. She has become so overbearing since her father made his money that I never speak to her when I can avoid it. Now I'll leave you and see the Chief, and find out if they are going to do anything. You had better not go out for a while."

He left me, and I finished dressing. I had not the slightest idea of taking his advice about not going out, as, first, I had had no breakfast, and, second, I rather hoped that I would meet Ewing. When I reached the street, however, there was nobody in front of the restaurant that I knew, so I went in and ordered some eggs and coffee for breakfast.

When I came out, however, I walked directly into a group of men. Among them was Ewing. I had made no plan, but the instant I saw him I walked up to him, and said, "I understand, Mr. Ewing, that you have been circulating a story

about me this morning; I wish to tell you that it is absolutely false, and that I will hold you personally responsible if you repeat it again."

My appearance had taken him so completely by surprise that I was able to finish my speech without interruption; but he recovered himself as I spoke the last words, and, turning to the man next to him, McManus, said, "I wonder that black-leg son of a—" he did not finish for I struck him squarely on the mouth with my open hand.

He staggered back a few steps, and somebody grabbed my arm. But he recovered himself almost instantly, and made a rush at me. I shook myself loose from the man who was holding me and sprang to one side. Ewing passed in front of me. He turned quickly, but as he did so, I stepped forward and caught him on the side of his jaw with a long swing of my left arm. The blow was a beautiful one. He half rose from his feet, and shot backwards across the sidewalk, and landed in the gutter. He did not rise, and McManus ran to him and raised him up. But he was sound asleep, and slipped back again. Then I turned to the others. But there was no more fight in the crowd, even if they had been inclined that way in the beginning. I looked in each man's face; then I said, "Gentlemen, the story that Mr. Ewing has probably told you is absolutely false, as you will hear later to-day; but if any of you choose to believe it, and wish to drop my acquaintance, you can do so now, and you will find that I will never trouble you again."

I do not believe that, in their hearts, any of them were sorry that Ewing had got the worst of it, for now, without exception, they all hastened to say that they had not believed Ewing's story from the beginning, or that they were sure that there had been some mistake. A crowd was now beginning to form, so I thought it well to leave. I turned to one of the men, the leader of our Germans, with whom I had always been on friendly terms, and said, "I am now going to my rooms, if anybody wishes to see me about this, I will be there for the next two hours. I will be obliged if you will let those interested know."

He said he would, and I went up stairs. I stayed in until four o'clock, but nobody came to disturb me. I then decided to take a ride. I called up the livery stable by telephone to send around the horse I generally rode, and then put on my riding togs. When I went down stairs I found a darky already waiting for me with the horse. Nobody I knew was on the street. I mounted and rode toward the beach. My route down Tremont street led me past Mary's house, but all the blinds were closed and I saw nobody. I had the beach almost to myself. There was a high surf, blown up by the wind of the night before, but the wind itself had died down now, and the air was crisp, cool and bracing. I rode a long distance to the westward.

It was just on the verge of twilight when I turned down Tremont street again on my way home. As I neared Mary's house the gate opened and she came

out. I was so close to the sidewalk that only a few feet separated us. When she saw me her face flushed, until from her collar to her forehead she was the color of a rose, but though she looked at me straight in the eyes, she made no sign of recognition. It was a cut square and direct, and our acquaintance was at an end.

Since Howland's story—since the night before—I had been fearing it; but now that it had really come it hurt me as much as though it had been unexpected. I rode home slowly to the livery stable, and left my horse there, and then walked to my room. Howland was not in, and I was glad of it. When I turned on the lights, however, I saw that he had left a note for me saying that I need not worry about being arrested as he was certain that no charge against me would be made. The note was kindly meant, though unnecessary, as from the beginning the fear of arrest had not bothered me at all: it was not the arrest nor scandal that I cared about, but Mary. And now she had pronounced judgment. I changed my clothes and went out to dinner.

Over my coffee and cigar I tried to put in shape the thoughts which had been passing through my mind all day. My battle was lost, principally through my own foolishness, and now what happened did not make any difference. I prolonged my dinner, sipping *passe cafés* and smoking, until nearly ten o'clock. Men I knew were passing in and out constantly, and most of them nodded

to me and I to them in return, but they left no mark on my consciousness. Over and over again I repeated to myself, "Nothing now makes any difference."

There was still, however, one more thing to try. Mary had only heard one side of the story. I would write to her and explain. I returned to my room and wrote, rapidly, a long letter. I stopped once to telephone for a hack. When I finished it was nearly eleven o'clock. I gave the letter to the hackman, with instructions to stop at the side gate, and to find out from some of the servants if Miss Andrews was up, before delivering it. If she was not, to return the letter to me, if she was, to wait for an answer. And above all to be quick.

He was even quicker than I hoped. Before half an hour was over he had returned. And the letter was in Mary's handwriting. I paid him, and ran up to my room, for I had been waiting for him at the foot of the stairs. I turned on the electric light and tore open the envelop, and—and—my own letter was inside, unopened.

I went to Henry's and sat down at one of the corner tables. My last hope was gone. I had failed. "Nothing now makes any difference." I looked idly around the room. A flaring poster caught my eye. It advertised the coming Mardi-Gras at New Orleans. I had not been to a Mardi-Gras in years. Why not go there, have a good time with my money while it lasted, and then

blow out my brains. To continue the life I had been leading until the day that Mary first entered into it I would not do. I had tried every form of vice and was tired of them all. To work along for myself alone was not worth the trouble. I might make a success in literature, but what was success, anyhow—a little praise, possibly, from people for whom I did not give a damn.

I arose from my seat, still undecided, and walked out into the street. The thought of Mardi-Gras gave a direction to my steps, and I turned towards the railroad station. It would do no harm to find out something about the trains. There would be one, I found, at three in the morning, which would connect at Houston with the through train for New Orleans. It was now about midnight. I returned to the room. Howland had not yet come in. I was surprised at first, until I remembered that there was to be a meeting of a lodge he belonged to that night, with a banquet afterwards. I had been invited to the latter, but had not cared to accept.

I picked up a book and tried to read, but could not; the backbone of my life was broken. I threw the book down and going to my bedroom mechanically began packing. I chose my smallest trunk, putting in it only a change of clothes, my dress-suit, and some shirts and underclothes. My books, papers, and everything else I decided to leave behind in charge of Howland, except such as had some connection with Mary. These I put in my

trunk to take with me. They did not make a very large bundle. If I kicked the bucket I could destroy them first. For the balance of my stuff I did not care—he could become my residuary legatee, and if he could get any money for my MMS he was welcome to it, for it would be more than I had been able to do.

After I had finished packing, I sat down to my typewriter and wrote Howland a note to the effect that, as there was nothing going to be done in the poker matter, and that my stay in town would probably be unpleasant for some time to come, I had decided to take a trip to New Orleans, and that I wished him to take charge of my things until my return, or, failing my return, until I gave him directions where to send them. I also told him to keep my room for the next three months, and to pay any outstanding bills that I might have, and I left sufficient money to cover these commissions.

It was now past two o'clock, so I telephoned for a hack, and mixed myself a long toddy to while away the time. In about fifteen minutes the hack came. I carried my trunk and hand-satchel down myself and gave them to the driver.

There was still time to spare when we reached the station, so I made myself as comfortable as I could in the day car, for there was no sleeper on the train. We started, at last, and I suppose I thought a great deal, though I have no recollection now of what I thought about, still, it must have

been of Mary. At Houston, where we changed cars, I had to wait nearly an hour for the New Orleans train. I wired ahead for a berth, and secured the drawing-room. As soon as the train came in I had the berth made up and went to sleep, not waking up until late in the afternoon when we were nearing New Orleans. By the time I was dressed the train was in Algiers. I crossed the ferry and went direct to the St. Charles hotel. The Mardi-Gras rush had not yet begun, so I had no difficulty in securing a room. I went to the barber shop and got shaved and then dined. After dinner I strolled out to see the town. There were many music halls and I drifted from one to another. In one of them—it was now about twelve—I noticed a man looking at me fixedly. I returned his gaze, and gradually his face grew familiar. He got up presently, and walked over to the table where I was sitting, and held out his hand. "Don't you remember me, Graham?" he said.

Instantly I remembered him, though we had not seen each other for years. He was a cousin of mine—the only one I possessed—and about as alone in the world as I was. He was many years my senior, and at one time had been a sort of ward of my father's; but when he grew up he had been so wild that my father had broken with him entirely. We, however, had always been friends, though I was still too young when he left our house to have ever been much of a companion of his—the ten years between ten and twenty being an im-

passable gulf. We talked together for about an hour, then left the music hall, and he took me to half the sporting places in town, and at one of them he left me, after we had made an engagement for the next day at a billiard hall where he generally spent the early afternoon. He wrote down the address for me, and after breakfast the next morning I went there. It was quite near Canal street. We played two or three games of billards, which he won, as he came very near being in the professional class. The last game he gave me odds. From the billiard hall we went to the race track. There were winter races being held in New Orleans this year, as, indeed, I think there are every year. We drove out in an open carriage. On the way he told me his business, if business it could be called—he gambled and followed the races for a living. He smoked incessantly, but never drank. He had as fine a mathematical mind as any man I have ever met. At all games of cards he was an expert. He was by birth a gentleman, and amid the crowd of gamblers and race-horse men with whom he associated, his word was never doubted. He knew the pedigrees of all the race horses and their best times, and whether they were good mud horses or not. Every evening, before dinner, he would take a seat in one of the pool rooms where the next day's entries were posted, and would pick out the probable winners; then, before the race started, he would see the owner to find out whether he intended to run his horse to win or

not. This is all an owner's opinion is good for, for they are nearly always prejudiced in favor of their own horses. Often, after I had been recognized as one of the inside ring, I would hear an owner ask my cousin before the race whether he thought that his horse had any show in the company that he was in or not.

This first day I did not bet, but amused myself by looking on. The grand stand was well filled, and I found the people more interesting than the races, for, as far as the horses were concerned, I did not know one from another. I was sitting at the extreme edge of the grand stand, just over the betting ring. My cousin had left me soon after I entered. Two or three races had been run before I noticed a very pretty-looking girl on the seat just behind me. Some exclamation that she made attracted my attention. When she saw me looking at her she said, "Won't you please ask your friend who is going to win the next race?"

"Certainly," I answered, and then I changed my seat to one beside her and we fell a talking. When my cousin came he joined us, and I asked him the question. He looked the girl over before answering, but did not seem to know her, then he said that he was not betting on the race, but thought that some horse, I forget the name now, had a good chance to win. He advised her not to bet, however, as the odds on the horse he liked were too high. She did not take his advice, however, but backed another horse that somebody had told her the

night before was a sure thing. The race came off, and I watched it with interest. Neither horse, I remember, won, but some rank outsider. My cousin left us again, and I did not see him any more until the races were over. I spent the rest of the time talking with my new acquaintance. She was quite bright, and had evidently been well educated. She was now, she told me, a variety actress, and was playing at one of the music halls. I left her when my cousin joined me after the races, having made an engagement to meet her after the theatre that night.

On our way home my cousin told me never to ask his opinion of a race in public, as if others heard him it might spoil his betting, or the betting of his friends. The bookmakers kept a close watch on him, as his crowd had been hitting them heavily this meeting. I appreciated his reasons and promised obedience. He also suggested that, as there was a spare room in the house where he was lodging that I should take it. I decided to do so, and moved from the hotel before dinner. It was a free and easy place and suited me exactly. You could do anything you wanted, except make a noise. In one of the rooms a poker game was run every night.

After dinner that evening I went to the theatre, and then to the variety show. I took one of the boxes and waited. Almost immediately my race track friend joined me. Her act was over, she said, and she had been waiting for me. I bought

permission for her to go out from the manager, as according to her contract she could not go out before three, and I took her to supper. It cost me, with the wine, about twenty-five dollars, but afterwards she went home with me.

I will not go into details with my life in New Orleans—it was merely a repetition of my Galveston life, with the exception that I resolutely refrained from thinking, and was now absolutely reckless. My race-track girl's name was Ethel—at least she said it was—and I went with her everywhere. She jumped the theatre, and came to my room to live. I do not think that I was really sober a single minute, for I always took enough drinks before breakfast to give me a good start for all day, though I never got drunk either. When I was not with Ethel, I was with my cousin. In the morning we would play billiards, and in the afternoon would attend the races, either at the track or at the pool rooms. If we went to the track Ethel would go out with us. I spent a great deal, but my money, in lieu of diminishing, increased. This was due to my cousin. I knew enough to know that my judgment of horses was worthless, especially when run in the way they were in New Orleans, so implicitly followed his advice. Nearly every day we won or broke even, very rarely we lost. Poker I did not play, as for some reason I kept the resolution to stop which I had made in Galveston. Mardi-Gras came and went. I saw the processions and attended most of the balls—that is to say

of the fast ones. Sometimes I played faro, and one night I made a big winning.

It was four days after Mardi-Gras; I was out at the race track with Ethel. The last race of the day was called. I had won every race so far and was loaded with money. The horses went to the post. My cousin and I were backing a long shot straight and place as against the favorite. We were standing by the fence in front of the judges' stand, and the owner of the favorite was with us. He was a young man and was visibly excited. The race was for a mile. The horses started from in front of us. The favorite got off well and took the lead and kept it to the entrance of the stretch. Then our horse made a spurt, and just as they passed under the wire, poked her nose in front, and won the race. The owner of the favorite gave a groan. "That ruins me, Harry," he said to my cousin, "that son of a bitch of mine can't go fast enough."

The judges now put out the number of our horse, and my cousin gave our tickets to one of his hangers-on to collect. The owner of the favorite tore his up slowly, "It's clear ruin," he said, "suicide is the only thing left."

"Oh, it can't be as bad as that," said my cousin, "you'll brace up to-morrow."

"Never," the other replied, "I've exhausted every resource to bet on this race. I had the thing sure. Jackson's horse was the only one I was afraid of, and he scratched him, as he promised me. I can never pay what I owe." He stopped and

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looked desperately up and down the track. Then he turned suddenly to my cousin; "Harry," he said, "give me a hundred dollars for the Queen and I'll go home and make up with my father and stop racing for good."

My cousin shook his head. "I'll buy you a ticket for home," he said, "but I would not take the Queen for a gift. She'll ruin any man that races her."

"But she's sound and strong," the owner interjected.

"Sound and strong all right," answered my cousin, "but she can't spurt. I've told you that fifty times. She's all right for endurance, but she has no speed. I'd back her in a three mile race, but nothing less."

The owner gave another groan and dug his heel in the sand. Suddenly an idea occurred to me. I turned to the owner. "A hundred dollars seems a very cheap price for your horse," I said, "why do you ask so little?"

"There's a feed bill to pay," he answered, "and a slow race horse is a hard thing to sell."

"How much is the feed bill?" I asked.

"Oh, seventy-five or a hundred—not over a hundred."

"I'll buy the Queen," I said.

"Are you serious?" he said, and there was a little choke in his voice.

"Dead serious," I answered, "if you can give me a clean bill of sale."

"That I can," he replied, "and I'll leave for home to-night."

In an hour everything had been arranged, and I had sent my horse to a livery stable in town. My cousin was disposed to gibe me over my purchase, and prophesied my ruin; but he did not know the idea that had suddenly occurred to me. That morning I had happened to think, on passing the St. Charles hotel, of looking over the letters, and I found that one had been lying there for me for nearly three weeks. It was from Howland, and had been written shortly after I had left Galveston. It was quite a long letter, and among other things, it said: "It was well that you left town as suddenly as you did. The whole Ewing and Andrews tribe are after you. They threaten to do all sorts of things as soon as they find out where you are. Ewing, as I don't suppose you know, was pretty badly hurt. His jaw was broken by your blow. He will not appear in public for some time—but really I am angry with you for leaving so suddenly. It has given all the ill-natured people a chance to say that you ran away because you were afraid, and the poker story has been revived again. Still, it is as well that you do not come here for a while, as the whole town is incensed against you." The remainder of the letter was unimportant.

And this had decided me to return to Galveston immediately. My intention had been to take the train the next afternoon, though I had as yet

said nothing to my cousin; but the offer of the horse had changed all my plans, and even while the man had been speaking, I had made up my mind to ride to Galveston. Ethel was something of an obstacle, as she had more than once told me during the past week that she had made up her mind to never leave me. To prevent a scene I decided not to tell her that I was going. I was really under no obligations to her, as during the two or three weeks that we had been together, she had cost me several hundred dollars in dresses and silk underclothes, for she was very dainty in her personal habits; and there was no fear of her breaking her heart, as her love, though strong while it lasted, was not of a particularly durable quality. She had already confided to me the history of several of her previous affairs. To leave some money for her with my cousin would be enough, though she had also won something on the races.

The next morning I bought a rough suit of Scotch tweed, and a pair of black leather riding leggings which fitted like boots, and reached to just above my knees in front; I liked them much better than those hideous English riding things. I also bought a grey slouch hat, something like those used in the army, though with a slightly wider brim, and in lieu of a shirt, wore a bicycle sweater which fitted closely round the throat. I rode an English saddle with sweat-leathers. A pair of heavy leather gauntlets completed my costume. My personal baggage was very light; a pipe and a sack of tobacco,

a toothbrush, a pair of pajamas, and a rubber rain coat. These, except my pipe and tobacco, I rolled up and fastened to the back of my saddle by strings which I had attached for the purpose. My money, which in spite of all my expenses, had increased, and now amounted to over fifteen hundred dollars, I converted into N. Y. exchange, except a hundred dollars which I reserved for expenses on the road.

About noon, after having had my horse re-shod for the road, I went to bid my cousin good-by. I had expected him to be surprised, but was disappointed. He had lived a life of excitement too long for a trifle like my sudden departure to disturb his equanimity. He was sorry to lose me, though, he said, and promised to look after Ethel. I then crossed the river and started on my journey. The day was cold, but clear and dry. I chose the line of the Southern Pacific, as I had not the slightest idea of the road, and it would serve as a guide. I did not mount my mare until I was in Algiears, and my first introduction to her was exciting. She was as timid as an old woman trying to cross lower Broadway during the height of traffic. Every moment she tried to bolt, and before I reached my night's stopping place, my arms were nearly wrenched out of their sockets. I only made twelve miles, but was as tired, and Queen was as exhausted as though we had gone fifty. I spent the night at a farm house. The next day was almost as bad. I was stiff and sore, and after covering some fifteen

miles had to stop for repairs. I spent the afternoon getting acquainted with Queen. It was a long time since I had last groomed a horse, and my ideas were rather hazy, but with the aid of a nigger boy I managed to make a pretty fair job, and Queen seemed grateful. The third day I started early. For half an hour Queen and I fought along as usual. I was beginning to grow tired, when suddenly she dropped into the most perfect fox trot that I have ever known. The change was like moving from a broken legged rocking-horse into an arm chair. For mile after mile she continued without tiring. We must have gone twenty-five or thirty miles when I stopped for the day. It was not yet noon. From now on I had no trouble. Day after day passed without incident. The weather was perfect. Hardly any rain fell. Queen grew to know my voice and obeyed me like a dog.

We had been out ten days. I had missed the main road. About dark I found myself in front of a negro's cabin inside of which some sort of jollification was going on. I stopped to find out where I was. The nearest village was some six or eight miles distant. I asked permission to spend the night, which was readily granted, though with many apologies for the poor accommodation. I decided to sleep outside. The place was crowded with darkies who had come to attend a wedding which had taken place that noon, and to indulge in a dance in honor of the bride and groom.

After supper, which I enjoyed more than any

meal that I had ever taken in my life, I lit my pipe and stretched out on the cot which they had prepared for me outside, and, with Queen for a companion, wrapped in a blanket, which with much difficulty I had induced them to sell me, I lay listening for hours to their music and singing. About midnight the guests all left, and the house became quiet; but I had no desire to sleep. Some chords had been stirred in me which had been lying dormant for many days. For hours I watched the different constellations as they drifted past, and reviewed more calmly than I had ever done before my past life. I cannot remember the exact sequence of my thoughts, but just before dawn I came to a resolution: come what would, and cost what it might, Mary should become my wife; or I would die trying—from that moment, in thought or action, I would do nothing that would render me unworthy of her highest self. I left my cot and walked up and down the road until daylight, when I fed and attended to my horse.

After breakfast I was about to light my pipe as usual, when, like a blow, I suddenly remembered that Mary did not like smoking. I hesitated: a life without smoking or a life without Mary. For an instant my whole future hung in the balance. If I failed now at the outset I knew that I should never have the strength to try again. No more drinking: no more of the wild excitements of the Mardi-Gras balls: no more Ethels—then I put my pipe under my heel and crushed the bowl to pieces.

And now I was possessed with an almost feverish anxiety to reach Galveston. I urged my horse on to the limit of her strength. The next Saturday night saw me at a large farm house only ten miles distant from Mary. I stopped there so as to enter early Sunday morning.

VI.

It was just 9:30 when I rode into the livery stable, where, before I left Galveston, I had been accustomed to hire my horses. Only the stable boys were present. I left Queen with them to receive a thorough cleaning, and walked to the barber-shop on Tremont street about half a block distant. I entered by the side door and went direct to the bath-room. I had met no one that I knew. While undressing I sent out a messenger to the nearest haberdasher that he might find open to buy me a complete suit of underwear, and a white shirt with collar and cuffs, and all the various sundries which would be necessary for a complete interior change from the ground up. My coat had stood the trip well, and would still make a good appearance. My hat I also retained. Undressed, I went to the steam-room, and then had a rub-down. I spent about an hour and a half in the bath, then went to the main room to dress. I borrowed a razor from the barber-shop and shaved. I felt almost painfully clean, when, at a quarter to twelve, I returned again to the stable. Queen had also had a bath, and looked as fresh as I did. I had her saddled and rode out. The day was clear, and rather cold for that latitude in March. I wanted to see Howland, but a message that I had sent to his room had been returned undelivered. I would probably find him at church—either the Episcopalian or Presbyterian;

probably the latter, as Miss Wallace attended there, and also, sometimes, Mary. It stood at the corner of 19th and Winnie. I rode there. They were singing inside, from which I judged that the sermon was over, so I drew Queen up to the edge of the sidewalk in front of the main entrance, and waited. After a short time the music stopped; then came a long period of silence; then the big doors of the church opened, and the people began pouring out, at first stragglingly, and then in a solid mass.

If it had been my intention to create a sensation I certainly succeeded. I did not know one-tenth of the people, but they all seemed to know me; and as soon as I was recognized a whispering started which passed through the entire crowd. I had not thought of this, and if it had not been that it would have appeared like running away in face of the enemy, I would have wheeled my horse around and escaped. As it was I fixed my eyes stonily, and pretended to be unconscious of the attention that I was attracting. The crowd was beginning to thin slightly when I saw Howland. He did not see me, as his attention was centered on buttoning his glove. I understood this, so was not surprised when the next instant Miss Wallace appeared. He joined her, and apparently asked permission to walk home with her, for they came down the steps together.

Of all the people in Galveston, except Mary, these were the only two whose friendship I cared for, and

I wondered now how they would greet me, for they could not well pass without seeing me. If they cut me the blow would hurt. At the bottom of the steps they turned towards Broadway, and then Miss Wallace saw me. She gave a little exclamation of surprise, then, leaving Howland's side, walked to the edge of the sidewalk and held out her hand. "Oh, I'm so glad to see you," she said.

I took her glove in my heavy gauntlet and pressed it warmly—almost more warmly than I had any right to do—but when one is braced against the world a little kindness is unnerving. She gave me one quick look, then her eyes fell. The next instant Howland was at her side, and his greeting to me was as friendly as hers had been, though differently expressed. "I never thought the sight of your face would give me so much pleasure," he said as he shook my hand, "but you represent two new hats, a new suit, and a tennis racket."

"And I have five pounds of candy, and a pair of the best gloves made," interjected Miss Wallace.

Then followed a volley of questions and answers while the last stragglers from church looked on in undisguised amazement. They had, it seemed, been betting that I would return before the end of Lent.

Presently Miss Wallace said, "You must come and take dinner with me to-day," then, seeing dissent in my eyes, continued before I had time to reply, "You *must* come. There will only be Mr. Howland and papa, and I have a thousand questions to ask you."

"But I haven't any clothes," I objected.

"Oh, that's nothing," she answered, "come as you are;" then, as she looked me over critically, added, "You're all right; you look as if you had just stepped out of a picture-book."

I bowed ironically, and she laughed: "Come along with us now," then, as she saw Queen for the first time, she cried, "What a beautiful horse," and stepped forward to pat her on the neck.

I was about to make some reply, when Queen, who had been growing more and more restless, sprang forward at her movement, and it was not until Broadway was reached that I was able to get her close to the sidewalk again. But even then connected conversation was impossible, for the crowd, and the women's dresses, and the electric cars, made her so nervous that it was all I could do to keep her from bolting.

On Broadway and 21st street there was a block of the cars coming from the beach, and I had to rein up until they passed. Queen was almost wild, now, and I had to keep constantly caressing her neck and lavishing enough terms of endearment on her to supply a honeymoon to keep her quiet.

After over a minute the line started, each motor-man jangling his warning bell. This was too much for Queen. As the last car passed, she jerked her head free and sprang forward before I could see whether the other track was clear. I leant forward and got a good grip on the reins again, just as a deep shout of warning came from the crowd. I

looked up. Coming rapidly from the opposite direction was another car which until now had been hidden from view. It was not five feet from me, and Queen's front hoofs were already almost on the rails. The warning came too late. There was not time to pass in front, and Queen's momentum was too great to stop her before she should reach the rails. I grew cold as ice, but my head was clear. I heard a woman's scream, and the same instant, by sheer strength, raised Queen on her hind legs, with her front hoofs almost touching the top of the car. A second more and the danger was over. The car passed: but Queen still stood swaying in the air almost paralyzed with terror. I leaned far forward to prevent her from falling backward on me and looked around. There on the opposite corner, only a few yards from me, stood Mary. Her hands were tightly clasped over her breast, and her lips were slightly parted as though she were exhausted from running. By her side stood Ewing.

Another instant and it was over. Queen's front hoofs came slowly to the ground, and tremblingly she picked her way across the track and to the opposite side of the street. The crowd began moving again and the hum of conversation recommenced. Howland and Miss Wallace crossed the street, the latter's face bleached of every particle of color. I jumped off Queen, and, slipping her bridle over my arm, joined them; though before I spoke I put my arm around Queen's neck, and, after pressing her to me, gave her a lump of sugar. In our long ride

she had learned that sugar meant approval, and now, though she only sniffed at it at first, it quieted her somewhat, and presently she took it in her mouth. I then turned to Miss Wallace. The color was slowly coming back to her face, though I noticed that the hand which held her unopened parasol was trembling.

Howland was the first to speak, "Where in the world did you get that horse, Graham?" he asked.

It was typical of him not to make any comment on the little incident just passed, though his face had also a bleached look.

"New Orleans," I answered.

"How did you get it here?"

"I rode."

We had been walking along slowly, but now he stopped abruptly, "You rode—from New Orleans?"

"From New Orleans," I answered, and then I saw a chance for some revenge. Just in front of us, detained by the crowd which had been caused by the block of the cars, were Mary and Ewing—they could not help but hear our conversation. "You remember the letter you wrote me just after I left," I continued, "How the jackals were feasting on my reputation: How some had even said that I had left for fear of the consequences of having thrashed a cur—whereas I considered that I had performed a praiseworthy action—all this decided me to return immediately. Unfortunately, however, your letter laid in the St. Charles hotel three weeks before I received it. I had not dreamed after

your note to me, in which you said that the true story of the night before was becoming known, and that I would be thoroughly cleared, that the falsehoods would be revived again in my absence. The cause of my sudden departure was something which had absolutely no connection with that day's events—the cause—was—a misdirected letter which was returned to me while you were away from—the—dead-letter office." I stopped. We had reached the corner of Tremont. Mary and Ewing had heard every word. We crossed the street, while they turned to the left. For the last half block Ewing had been making desperate efforts to get out of ear-shot, without actually shoving the people in front of him out of the way; but the crowd in front had been too thick.

Across the street, and in front of Miss Wallace's house we stopped, and Miss Wallace ran inside to call a groom to take my horse to the stable. As soon as she was gone Howland gave his low, selfish laugh of inward enjoyment; "Graham," he said, "you are the most vindictive scoundrel I know. May we never become enemies. You are capable of charging a battery with a tooth-pick, or hiding behind a fence and shooting your enemy through the back."

Probably my action would not bear critical examination, but Ewing was engaged to Mary, and I hated him and despised him as I had never hated or despised a human being before. If it became necessary Howland's estimate of my character might

not prove so wrong, though up to that moment I had never thought of killing Ewing except in a general way.

VII.

Howland's words were intended jestingly, but nevertheless they expressed to a certain extent his true feelings. I spent a week in my old rooms next to his office, and then moved. A something had come between us—and that something was Miss Wallace. We were both reticent men, and neither of us had ever told the other our real feelings toward the two girls to whom we had both shown marked attention. I was almost certain that he was in love with Miss Wallace, while I do not think that he even suspected my feelings toward Mary. And I think that the last Sunday had caused him to believe that I was his rival. Miss Wallace had been extremely nice to me during the dinner, and maybe I had responded more than I ought to have, though she was such a very nice girl that there was nothing surprising in that—still, I was not in the least in love with her. However it was, though, Howland and I began to drift apart, and a week showed me that we would be better friends if a little more distance should separate us. I also had another reason for leaving. Mary was still as unapproachable as ever. Cat-a-cornered from her house was a large boarding-house, the corner room of which commanded the whole place. As I could not speak to her, I, at least, wished to be as near her as possible; so, one afternoon, as I was walking past, I stopped there. Somebody, I forget now whom, had told me that

the corner room was vacant. I went inside and asked for the landlady. Here a surprise awaited me: I found that the boarding-house keeper was an old Sunday-school teacher of mine, in the days when I had been a sweet, innocent boy, and that she was a strong partisan of mine. I secured the room without difficulty, and that night slept within a hundred yards of Mary.

I had been a week in Galvéston, as I have said, before I moved. Though I had not succeeded in getting speech with Mary, it had not been entirely wasted, for I was seeing her every day. The Sunday evening of my arrival, before going to bed, I had mapped out a most ironclad regime of work to occupy every minute of my time, for I did not dare to be idle. The morning hours were to be divided between writing and exercise, and the evening to reading or calling. I had decided to give up the club. The first item on my list was a ride before breakfast, and Monday morning, shortly after six, I was on the beach. I rode westward for nearly an hour, and then turned homeward. I was about a mile from Tremont street when I saw Mary in the distance coming towards me. She was walking her horse, and I instantly brought Queen down to the same gait. We approached each other slowly. Whether it was pride on her part or some other reason I do not know, but she made no effort to avoid me after she recognized me. We passed within a

few feet of each other, and I might as well have been in Egypt in so far as she showed any consciousness of my presence. It required all my self-control to keep from speaking to her, but I succeeded, and passed her with a face as expressionless as her own, though inwardly I was trembling. The next day I met her again at nearly the same hour, and so, day after day, for the remainder of the week.

At first, in spite of the pain, these meetings pleased me; then they only tantalized me the more. Mid-Lent was over, and after Lent she had told me that her engagement to Ewing would be announced. I wrote her four or five letters, none of which, of course, I sent. She had already shown me the uselessness of writing.

The first week was over and I had not succeeded in securing a single word with Mary. The schemes I had evolved for getting her alone and forcing her to talk with me were endless. One, which I never really seriously considered, but which I worked out in a number of different ways in my waking dreams, was to kidnap her. The favorite of these was to carry her off in a steam yacht. I would send her a forged note from her father, or somebody else, telling her to come down to the pier to look at a new boat. She would, of course, enter into the cabin without suspicion. Then, while some one was showing her around, the boat would start. If she should notice the movement, and should inquire the reason, she

would be told that they were going to take a trip out to the jetties. This would not excite her suspicions, as somebody or other does it every day. Once out of sight of land I would appear, and then—the tragedy would begin. The drawbacks to this plan were many. First, I did not have money enough to buy a steam yacht—this, of course, was not insurmountable, as I might be able to steal one—but, second, the crew: the most hardened pirate cannot run a steam yacht without coal passers, and the other smutty looking creatures who live below. These would have to be taken into my confidence, and that was out of the question. Third—and the really insurmountable obstacle—was that after we had actually put to sea, and I had appeared in my character of villain, all that she would have to do would be to say, “Mr. Woodhouse, please put me ashore immediately,” and I would do it. I would not want to do it, but I would. Then she would leave with scorn in her eye, and I would sit on the smoke-stack and bite my nails. I can work out theoretically the most complicated schemes, but when they involve forcing a woman against her will I cannot carry them out.

So I was seeing Mary every day and she was ignoring my presence. I wonder now how I stood it. It was only by adhering rigorously to my program that I managed to get through the day. It was ride, breakfast, writing, gymnasium, dinner, writing, walk, supper, reading or calling, bed. Miss Wallace was the greatest comfort to me. I called there

two or three times a week. She helped to take me out of myself. Sometimes I ran across Howland there, but generally I would let her know by telephone when I was coming so as to find her alone. She was the only girl I called on, though I might have called on some of the others, as none of my former acquaintances failed to bow to me when I met them on the street.

It was the morning after I had changed my lodgings. I had slept late. As I started out I passed Mary on the beach going homewards. She cut me as usual. For several days, now, I had been racing Queen every morning to keep her in condition, and to relieve me of the nervousness caused by my stopping smoking. Another of my favorite day-dreams was to have Mary's horse run away and to rescue her; but she rode too well.

After I had passed her this morning, and had come to a clear part of the beach, I let Queen out for her usual run. I was far too heavy for a jockey, of course, though Queen was naturally a weight-carrier, and must have come from hunting stock. We had only gone a few hundred yards when I was taken with a most violent stitch in the heart which almost stopped my breathing. I tried to pull in Queen, but she knew that she had not gone her regular distance, so supposed that I was only joking, for she did not stop. Again I pulled on the reins without success. Then the pain became so intense that it was either stop or fall off. I gave a last terrific jerk. The right bridle-rein broke; but the left held,

and I pulled Queen into the gulf. This stopped her running pretty quickly, but to punish her I made her stay in the water until I could breathe again.

I patched up the bridle sufficiently to take me home, and during the day I bought another and stronger one; but the accident had given a new turn to my thoughts, and in my next day-dream I had Mary's bridle break. And why shouldn't it break—it was much less strong than the one of mine that had broken. Where it joined the bit there were a dozen or so nickel plated steel links, and nothing is more easy than for one of these links to become loose. And then a hard pull on the bridle, a jerk of her horse's head, and she would find herself helpless—and her horse had both these habits.

The next day I watched from my window until I saw the stable-boy bring her horse around to the side gate of her house before I went down to the stable to saddle Queen—I had moved her from the livery stable in town the day before. I waited until Mary mounted before I started out. Not to appear to be following her I rode down Bath avenue to the beach, and then in the same direction that she had taken, though at a considerable distance behind. Her horse was more restless than usual, but I waited in vain for her bridle to break. The next day, Wednesday, it was the same.

It was during my walk that afternoon that the idea, which had been gradually forming in my mind, first took definite shape. I had been thinking of my cousin, from whom I had received a letter a

few hours before, stating that he had expressed my trunk, and that Ethel had left New Orleans, and a favorite remark of his was running through my mind: "When Providence don't help me, I try to help Providence."

Providence was *not* helping me, and the time had come to act.

During the evening and late into the night, I worked on the details of my plan. It was desperate enough, but I must have an opportunity to talk with Mary alone, and by her own free will.

The next day, when I thought it over, I changed my mind, and decided to do what I had refrained from doing since my return—that is, to write to Mary again. I found the letter a very hard one, and though I tried to make it short, feeling how hopeless it was, I could not. When it was finished I sent it immediately to Mary's house by a messenger. In about half an hour he returned and handed me a well-filled envelope addressed in her writing. I paid him for his trip and waited until he had left the room before I opened it. As I feared, my own letter was returned; but there was also a short note from Mary. I read it eagerly.

"Dear Mr. Woodhouse," it said, "pardon me if I seem unnecessarily rude in returning you your letter unopened, but nothing that you could say can make any difference now. Please do not write to me again."

My first sensation was one of relief, for the sight of my own letter returned had prepared me for something terrible and for the remainder of the day

I admitted myself beaten, and gave up all thought of carrying my plan into execution. But during the night the reaction set in, and I awoke the next morning undecided. I rode out earlier than usual, not waiting for Mary to start; but though I spent until nine o'clock on the beach, she did not appear, nor did I see her during the entire day. This was the last straw; my scruples vanished, and during the night I carried out my plan.

Long before daylight the next day, Saturday, I was up and dressed, and watching Mary's house from my window. Six—seven—eight o'clock came, but her horse was not brought out. At half past eight I went down stairs to the dining-room, and ate a very light breakfast, watching, the while, the front of Mary's house, for from my seat at the table I could command a view of the street; but nothing happened. Finishing breakfast I returned to my room, and resumed my seat at the window. At ten Mary came out of the front gate dressed for the street, and I knew that she would not ride that morning. This gave me a moment's respite, so I took a trip to the stable to see whether the man I had hired had followed the instructions I had given him in regard to Queen. She was just finishing breakfast, so I told him to give her nothing more to eat until further orders.

I then returned to my room, and resumed my watching, for though it was hardly probable that Mary would ride at that hour of the day, I did not dare to take any chances.

At twelve she returned, and at one her father came in. Walter, by the by, was not in town, having been exiled to his father's sugar plantation, nominally as manager, but in reality in disgrace. I knew that she was safe for an hour or two, so dined, before resuming my watch. The time passed with fearful slowness, and after four it fairly dragged. There was no way of killing it. I was not smoking, and I was not drinking, and I did not dare to take my eyes long enough away from the house to read. Half past four—quarter to five—if the horse did not appear at five Mary would not ride that day, and I would have another twenty-four hours of suspense, with the strong probability of my action being discovered.

It was just five minutes to five when the stable door opened, and the coachman led out Mary's horse—saddled. I slipped my little pistol in the inside breast pocket of my coat, and the next instant was in the stable saddling Queen feverishly, but with great care—everything now depended on her. Before passing through the gate of the stable-yard, which opened on the alley, I looked through a crack in the fence at Mary's house. Two horses were now in front of it, and Ewing was just assisting Mary to mount. I cursed deeply, but remained looking until Mary was safely up, and Ewing was also mounted. His horse was one that I had never seen before, and I noticed that the coachman had to hold its head while he struggled into the saddle. He could not ride a little bit. They started, then

I led Queen out, and mounted also. They were about a hundred yards ahead. Ewing's horse was dancing from one side of the street to the other, and he had his hands full. They continued at a walk until the beach was reached, and then turned westward. A cold breeze was coming from the gulf, and a light fog was rising. There were but few people out driving. I followed them, still the same distance behind. I do not think they noticed me.

They had gone about half a mile, still walking, when Mary, after apparently saying something to Ewing, touched her horse with her whip. He started off at a quick pace, and Ewing's horse, which had been growing more and more restless, sprang after him. The jump caused Ewing to lose his seat, and he pulled heavily on the reins. But his horse's blood was up, and he still continued forward with a series of bounds, his speed increasing each instant. I saw that the end was coming and let Queen out a little. The next moment Ewing half slipped, half jumped from his horse, losing the reins as he did so. He landed on his feet and his horse was off like a shot. Mary turned at his cry, and tried to stop her horse. She put both hands to the reins and pulled heavily. Her horse threw his head back suddenly, almost striking her in the face, and then jerked forward. The reins broke and she swayed backwards in the saddle. For a moment she hung there, and I thought that she was about to fall, and my heart

stopped beating; but gradually she straightened up and resumed her seat while her horse lowered its head and was off after Ewing's at a dead run. The next instant Queen and I dashed by Ewing, as he stood helpless, and the race began. My plan was working. My nervousness fell from me and my brain grew clear. I saw everything without looking: to the westward the setting sun half hidden by a mass of blood-red clouds all growing fainter each instant under the haze of the fast thickening fog: in front, Mary, some sixty yards away, bending forward and apparently grasping her horse's mane: on my left the gulf gently rippling on the hard shell beach. She had thrown away her useless reins, but her whip was still hanging from her wrist.

A minute passed, and then, for the first time, a great dread seized me, for I saw that I was not gaining. The cold sweat oozed out on my forehead in great drops. The strain was terrible. We were alone on the beach, now, for the few carriages going in our direction had been quickly left behind, while none were coming toward us. Another minute passed, and then at last training began to tell; inch by inch, foot by foot, I gradually crept up; yard by yard the distance between us lessened. Mary's hat had fallen off, and her hair was loosening. As I came still nearer I could hear that she was breathing in short gasps, and saw that she was swaying in the saddle. It was now simply a question of endurance. To spur Queen I knew was useless—

she was doing her best. A long interval, or what seemed long then, followed, while I sat helplessly in the saddle. But still the distance between us lessened, until I was not more than five yards behind. Her horse was now laboring badly, and its even gait had changed to a series of jerks. In one of these he shook her hands loose from his mane, and she swayed heavily to one side supported only by her foot in the stirrup. I had kept silent until now, but the sight of her about to fall was more than I could endure, and, beside myself, I cried out, "For God's sake, Mary, keep your seat a moment longer."

She heard me, for her shoulders suddenly straightened, and for an instant she again sat erect in the saddle. I thought quickly. My horse had now approached to within a yard of hers. On my left was the gulf—on my right the sand hills. I pulled on the left rein and passed between her and the water. As I reached her side she turned for the first time and looked at me. Though her eyes were open she seemed to have lost consciousness. Her breathing had ceased. There was not an instant to lose. My reins were in my left hand. I let the left rein slip from my fingers and pulled strongly on the right. Queen, obedient to the pressure, began crowding Mary's horse off the firm shell beach, and on to the thick sand a few yards to the right. A second more and both horses were plowing through it fetlock deep. I put my arm around Mary's waist, and whispered to her to loosen

her foot from the stirrup. She obeyed me mechanically. Another second and the horses had breasted a little sand hill, and were pausing exhausted on the top. I lifted Mary from her horse. As I did so her eyes closed, and I saw that she had fainted. I rested her a moment in front of me on the saddle, while I slipped to the ground; then I raised her in my arms and carried her down the landward side of the little sand hill. Her own horse, freed from the burden, wheeled around, and started homeward along the beach. Queen followed me. There was a little pool of water in a hollow at the bottom, and by the edge of this I laid Mary, with her head resting in the bend of my right arm. I dipped my handkerchief in the water and bathed her forehead. Her face was colorless; there was not the slightest movement to her body, and she seemed to have stopped breathing. Seconds—minutes—passed; how long I do not know. I felt that the end had come. I bent down and kissed her on the forehead—on the lips. Her body was still warm. With what half crazy words I begged her to come back to me I cannot now remember. Suddenly I felt her move slightly; then her eyes opened, and she looked at me; but there seemed to be no intelligence in her gaze. Then her breath began to come in short gasps—her breast heaved—then with a half articulate cry she raised herself, but fell back again in my arms.

"I'm—choking," she gasped, "open—my— dress." Then she fainted again.

Like a blind man I fumbled about her throat to find the fastening. The hook was hidden, and I cursed mentally, as I had often done before, over the intricacies of woman's dress. At last I found it, and unfastened it, as well as those which succeeded, until she could breathe freely. I noticed then, even in my excitement, that she did not wear corsets. I closed her dress again loosely over her breast, and once more bathed her forehead with water. Her consciousness returned this time more quickly than before, and she did not faint again; though, as her strength returned, she must, for the first few minutes, have suffered fearfully, for she could not breathe fast enough to fill her lungs, and each breath cut like a knife. I could do nothing but support her head, and bathe her forehead with water. Once or twice I heard the sound of voices, and the beat of horses' hoofs from the direction of the beach; but the fog and the sand hills hid us completely from the world, and we remained undiscovered. Presently Mary asked me for some water to drink. I looked around, but there was nothing that I could use to dip the water up with. My hat might have done, but it had fallen from my head during the ride. I thought a moment, and then remembered that I had with me the earliest of all cups—my hand. I told her this, and for the first time in many weeks she looked at me in the eyes and smiled. Then I

knew that the past was forgiven. Leaning over her I made a cup as well as I could with my hand, and, filling it with water, raised it to her lips. She sipped it eagerly, and asked for more. Again and again I filled my hand. She was as weak as a baby, and could not even raise her head without my assistance. Once she tried to, but had to let it fall back again. Something in the motion recalled to me the evening I had carried her across the gutter, and, looking down into her eyes, I said, "Do you know what this reminds me of?"

A faint color came to her cheeks, and she turned her eyes away from mine as she answered, "No, I don't;" but I do not think that she was telling the truth. We were very silent after this, and the darkness of early evening closed around us. Again there came the sound of voices from the beach. This time Mary also heard them. She raised her head slightly and listened. "Were those not voices calling?" she asked.

I answered promptly that they were not. She let her head sink down again, but I could feel that she was still listening. The calls were not repeated, however, and once more there was silence between us. I wished to speak, but for the moment the words needed would not come to me. Some minutes passed, then Mary raised her head again. "I feel stronger now," she said, "please help me up."

I raised her to her feet and stood from her. Instantly she swayed backwards, and would have fallen, had I not caught her, and once more she

rested helplessly in my arms. "Oh, how wretchedly weak I am," she said; then she looked down and saw that her dress was open. "Did—you—do—this?" she asked. It sounded like an accusation.

"You told me to," I cried; "Don't you remember? you were choking, and you told me to open your dress."

"After you——" she stopped abruptly, then continued with many pauses: "Yes, I remember—I was suffering fearfully—you cannot think how I suffered the last few minutes of the ride—I felt myself choking to death—I was about to fall when you called to me——" all the while she was fastening her dress feverishly—"you saved my life." Then her strength deserted her utterly, and she sank to the ground sobbing convulsively. Instantly I knelt beside her and put my arm around her waist. I was torn with remorse, but it was too late for regrets, and the time to speak had come. Any moment we might be interrupted.

"Mary," I said.

"Don't, please don't," she cried.

But I knew that it was my only chance, and continued: "I must speak now—you know why I am here in Galveston again—to see you. For two weeks I have waited for a chance—now it has come. You know that I love you——"

"Don't, oh, please don't," she cried again; and she drew her body away from me. I let my arm fall to my side.

"I cannot detain you against your will," I said;

“but do you think that it is fair to refuse to listen to me?”

Her sobbing had ceased, but she still sat helplessly on the ground; now she turned her head towards me; “I have told you that it is impossible,” she said.

“Then you do not care for me at all? but no, do not answer; I know that you cannot care for me—that you have more reason to dislike me—somehow—through my own fault—through my misfortune—I have always shown you my worst side—but I have a better side—now—that we are alone—I want you to make me a promise. You say that I have saved your life—give me—give me twenty-four hours in return. Let me see you alone one hour each day—in your house—anywhere. If, on the twenty-fourth day, you tell me to go, I will leave Galveston, and I will promise that you shall never see me again. Give me this chance, will you not?” I stopped and took her hand. She let me hold it while she answered, though she would not look me in the face. “Listen, Mr. Woodhouse,” she said, “please don’t make this any harder for me than it is. I am really very, very grateful. If you had not saved me I would have fallen, or been dragged to death by my horse. I have never disliked you—except—but we *are* friends now. I cannot be anything more to you. You know that you don’t really—love—me—because you don’t know me——” I pressed her hand—“then, if you do love me, it would be still harder for you

afterwards—I am engaged—and—and it is impossible.” She withdrew her hand from mine, and let it fall helplessly on the sand beside her. She looked so abject as she sat there, with her hair falling on her shoulders, and her eyes gazing downwards, that I hesitated to urge her again; but I had gone too far to retreat. I knew that never again would I have the courage to risk what I had this day. My plan had succeeded better than I had dared to hope, and I would not lose all that I had gained by yielding to weakness now. I took her hand again in mine, and she let it rest there passively. It was as cold as ice. “I know that you are engaged,” I said, “and I know how slight the chance is that I can ever make you feel towards me as I do towards you, but still that chance is everything to me. It is not so very much to ask, is it? Only one hour each day. I will take all the responsibility for what may happen on myself, and will never blame you. After the twenty-four hours are over I will go and you will never see me again; but, oh, please, please, give me these hours.”

Mary’s strength seemed to return to her suddenly, and she rose to her feet, “Do you think it is kind to urge me now, Mr. Woodhouse?” she asked, and her voice had a slight ring of anger in it.

“No, I do not,” I answered.

She smiled in spite of herself. “Then why do you do it?”

“Because it is the only chance I will have of

asking you. Soon you will be with your friends again, and then you will forget me."

"I will never forget this afternoon—nor you," and her voice grew soft again

"Then you will promise—you have warned me; but I refuse to take the warning. I ask for twenty-four hours in return for saving your life." My voice trembled a little at this, for it made me feel like a hypocrite to use it as an argument, and Mary noticed it immediately. But she misunderstood my feelings—for how could she know that I had pre-arranged the accident—and it softened her still more. "I will promise then," she said, "that is, if you insist; but remember that it is only as a friend."

I could hardly believe in my success. I took her hand again in mine—for she had removed hers when she rose to her feet—and said, "As friends, then," I paused a moment before I continued, "you promise me on your honor to let me see you one hour each day for twenty-four days—no matter what happens?"

She hesitated, but I was exerting all my will now, and she was still weak from her ride, "I promise," she said.

For a moment we stood in silence. Then, from the direction of the beach came the sound of voices calling, and the gleam of many lanterns showed over the sand hills. Mary sprang from my side. "Oh, poor mama," she cried, "I had forgotten her. They are searching for me. Call to them."

I gave a loud shout, which was answered from the beach, and helped Mary up to the top of the sand hill. She was trembling so that I had almost to carry her, and she clutched my shoulder with all her strength, though almost unconscious of my presence. At the top of the hill I called again, and a dozen lights hurried towards us. We passed down the opposite side of the hill and walked toward the lights. Suddenly I felt something cold touch my cheek. I turned quickly. It was Queen, whom I had forgotten, and who had followed us silently. I slipped the bridle over my arm, and the next moment we were in the center of a group of horsemen. Just then a carriage dashed up, and a voice, shrill with fear, cried, "What is it; oh, my God, what is it?" I could not recognize who it was, but Mary did, and she ran forward as the door of the carriage was thrown open, and Mrs. Andrews stepped out.

I had no part in the scene that followed. I turned to Queen and busied myself rearranging the saddle, and tightening the girth. The searchers on horseback, whom I now noticed were principally mounted policemen, began to disperse. Mary and her mother entered the carriage. I mounted Queen. As the carriage turned to begin its homeward journey, I rode to its side. Mary's head was resting on her mother's shoulder, and their arms were around each other. I stopped at the window, and held out my hand to Mary, saying, "Good night."

She leaned forward and took my hand, "Good-by," she said, "until to-morrow at four," then she turned again to her mother.

VIII.

It was nearly nine when I went to breakfast the next morning. I had spent most of the night doctoring Queen, who had caught a bad cold from standing so long in the damp air after her race, and I, also, was feeling rather stiff and tired.

I had just finished my oatmeal when a note was handed me. I recognized the writing immediately; it was Mary's. I turned cold all over—I knew that it meant bad news. I left the breakfast table and went to my room before I opened it. There were only a few lines, and I read them at a glance. The note ran:—

“Dear Mr. Woodhouse:

“Certain things have happened which will render it impossible for me to see you at my home this afternoon; but I am going out to the Denver Resurvey this morning on the ten o'clock car, and if you can join me I will explain.

“Sincerely,

“Mary Andrews.”

I did not hesitate an instant, but got out my best suit of clothes, and began dressing hurriedly. I had about half finished, when I changed my mind about my clothes, and put on, instead, the rough tweed suit that I had worn on my ride to Galveston. It was a pleasant spring day, not at all cold, and an overcoat was unnecessary. I left the house at half past nine and walked to 30th street and Broadway so as not to have Mary see

me waiting. She would get on the car, I knew, at 23d street. Two cars had passed almost empty, before Mary appeared. I recognized her two blocks off, though she was sitting near the center of the car, and I am ashamed to say that I immediately concealed myself behind a group of oleanders so that she should not see me until the car was abreast of where I stood. A long half minute passed before I heard the humming of the trolley; then I stepped forward quickly and boarded the car. My appearance took her by surprise, and the color, which she could never fully control, rose to her cheeks. But it passed almost instantly, and then I saw that she was deathly pale. I raised my hat and bowed, for no words came to me at the moment, and she bowed slightly in return. Then I took my seat beside her. Neither of us spoke, and the car rattled along up Broadway. We had it almost entirely to ourselves. At last I forced my nervousness down, and said, "I hope you were not hurt at all by what happened yesterday." It was not a very brilliant remark, but it was all that I could think of at the moment.

"I don't think so," she answered, "though my shoulders pain me awfully, and all my strength seems gone." Then we fell silent again, and it was not until the car had turned the curve at 42nd street, and was nearing the cemetery, that I once more spoke.

"Are you going to the Denver Resurvey for any particular reason?" I asked.

"No," she answered slowly. "There—it was—I must explain why you cannot call on me."

The car stopped a moment before the cemetery gates. "Then let's get off here," I said, "it's—it's rather a good place."

She understood my meaning instantly, and answered with a half smile, while she rose from her seat. I got off first, and she gave me her hand to help her down. As we walked towards the gate, I could see that she had not exaggerated her weakness, for she had to exert all her strength to keep from swaying from side to side. What a brute I felt like—and yet, if it had not been for yesterday, she would not have been with me now. We entered the gate and turned down one of the side paths. In my wanderings about Galveston, when I had been there before, I had drifted into the graveyard one day, and, in strolling around, had discovered a nook overgrown with vines where, unless one actually entered it, a person inside would be completely hidden from all passers-by. I led the way there now. There was an old tombstone, with the letters on it half obliterated, which served as a seat. We entered and sat down. Mary hesitated at first, then gave her skirt that peculiar twist, which only a woman can give, and took her place beside me.

"I cannot help it," she said, "whoever you are I apologize, but I am too tired to stand."

"It is a he," I remarked, "part of his name is George; I am sure he won't mind." I paused a

moment, then, changing the subject abruptly, said, "And now you want to tell me why you sent that note this morning." I tried to say this bravely, but in spite of myself there was a certain tremor in my voice. Mary turned to me with one of her quick glances which seemed to read one's very thoughts. "You are frightened," she cried. "Oh, I am so glad. I have been hating you for being so self-possessed ever since you got on the car. You did not seem to appreciate at all what I was doing for you—something that I have never done for any human being before. But you are not really cold-blooded——" suddenly she blushed—"No, I know that you are not. I told papa last night about what you had done, and that you were going to call. But he is still angry with you—though we all know now the true story about poor Walter. He said that you should never enter the house, and ordered me not to see you. There was—well, lots of things; but I told him that if I should happen to meet you, and you should speak to me, that I would answer you. He was very, very angry. Mama spent last night with me, and I told her everything. She said that I was very wrong to have made the promise I did, but that I could see you once, and explain to you the circumstances, and ask you to release me. She knows that I expected to see you this morning. Now I have told you everything, and I want you to give me back my word."

I did not answer immediately. A lizard came

out of some crevice and looked at us then hurried away again. "I wonder what those things live on," I said, finally, "stones?"

Mary laughed. "Don't change the subject that way, answer me."

I looked at the knob of my cane for a moment, then I looked at her. Her eyes met mine frankly for an instant, then she looked down. Her breast began to heave slightly. "Answer me," she repeated, but her voice was no longer so assured. I also looked downwards as I said, "Then the answer is, No."

She recovered herself instantly. "Now don't be foolish; you know that to see me will do no good."

"Probably not," I answered, "but I would not give up my remaining twenty-three hours for anything in the world. I cannot force you, of course, but I will not release you from your promise."

"But you *are* forcing me. I do not like you at all, and yet you want to make me spend a miserable month just because in a moment of excitement I gave you my word."

"I am sorry that it will be miserable; I know that somehow I always manage to show you my worst side, but in this I cannot give in."

"Then you mean, seriously, after what I have told you, to say that you are going to force your company on me an hour each day?"

"You do not put it very pleasantly," I answered,

and in spite of myself my voice had an angry ring, "but that is the substance of it."

"Very well, then, I have given you my word and I will keep it; but if you think that you will enjoy my company you will find yourself very much mistaken. Now, what time is it?"

I looked at my watch: "Twenty-three minutes to eleven," I said.

"Then I will stay here until twenty-three minutes to twelve. Now begin."

I started to slip my watch back into my pocket, but she stopped me. "No, leave it out," she commanded, "so that we can see how the time is passing."

Obediently I unfastened my watch and laid it on the gravestone. The position was sufficiently embarrassing, though I was conscious of the humor of it, and in comparison to what I had feared it was happiness. I waited a moment to see if Mary would say anything, but she merely sat up stiffly and gazed fixedly at the opposite side of the arbor. "Is there any particular subject you would like to converse on?" I asked, finally.

"I leave it entirely to you," she answered.

I looked around for an instant in search of an idea—and found one under me. It gave me a certain malicious pleasure. "What do you say to George, then," I asked, suddenly.

The question took Mary by surprise. She looked at me with widely-opened eyes. "George?" she questioned, "what George do you mean?"

"Just George. I don't know his last name, but he is the gentleman over whose remains we are at present seated."

Mary rose from her seat hurriedly. "It is cold and damp in here," she said, "let's go outside."

I got up also, and as I did so a rhyme occurred to me which suited the occasion, so I repeated it to her as we walked out:

She found the grave-stone
Cold and damp,
So quickly arose
And did decamp.

"You are a goose," she said; then she relapsed into frigidity again.

For the next half hour we wandered around reading the inscriptions, and I exerted myself to be disagreeable; then I remembered that I had left my watch on the grave-stone, and we returned to the arbor again. I found it where I had left it, and the time showed that we still had twenty minutes left. As I put my watch in my pocket Mary turned to me suddenly: "This is an utterly impossible position," she said, "I cannot meet you like this again, and it is hopeless to think of receiving you at the house." Then she gave me one of her quick smiles, and looked up to me with eyes the power of which she knew full well: "Now give me back my promise, won't you? and I will forgive you for to-day and will like you again."

"Tell me," I answered, "is there not somebody in town whom we both know where we could meet

accidently—there is one place I know of—a place where they sell flowers—there is an old lady, and she has snow-white hair which she wears in curls which hang down on both sides of her face——”

“Oh, I know whom you mean, Mrs. Gresham, but——”

“She is a great friend of mine, and she knows you, too; she used to send you anonymous violets for me when I was here last time.”

Mary looked at me quickly, and there was a light in her eyes that I had not seen since that day on the beach months before. “Were *you* the person who sent me those? Oh, how stupid I have been. I thought—I thought that they were from someone else. A big bunch came one day when I was sick, and I thanked him for them afterwards, and he let me believe that he had sent them. I’ll forgive you for lots of other things now.”

“What! other things!—are there other things?”

“Lots and lots; but I won’t think of them now—I might go to Mrs. Gresham’s to-morrow about nine, as I have to get some flowers for the evening.”

“Then I will see you there. And, oh, did your horse come back?”

“Yes, he was waiting at the stable door when we got home. And it is the strangest thing how my bridle broke; in the same place on both sides; right next to the bit. I cannot understand how it happened, as it was made of the best steel. Do you remember, you warned me against it. When I ride again I will use a double rein. I am frightened even now when I think of what would have happened

if you had not been near me at the time. Forgive me the disagreeable things that I have said this morning. And now good-by. Don't go to the car with me." She gave me her hand for an instant and was gone.

I sat down again on top of George and thought. Luck was running so strongly my way that I began to feel frightened. But there was still one dark shadow in the foreground, and until it was passed I could not feel safe, for what would Mary do if she ever learned that I was responsible for the breaking of her bridle.

I sat on the grave until dinner time, and then walked home. During the afternoon I wrote, as well as I could remember, an account of the events of the day. I had no definite plan in doing so, except that it might help me to understand Mary, and this diary I continued every day thereafter until the end. It is from it that I am writing this account.

At nine the next morning I was at Mrs. Gresham's. Mary had not arrived. Mrs. Gresham was also absent, and only a little negro boy was in charge. I told him that I would wait in the conservatory. It was nearly half after nine before Mary joined me. I had made up my mind during the night on the line of conduct that I would pursue, and now, as she entered, I greeted her as if her coming was the most natural thing in the world, and began talking flowers. She followed my lead instantly, and for the half hour we were alone together a

listener might have taken us for a pair of amateur botanists. She was looking beautiful this morning, and I remember that she wore a light grey dress without any visible signs of ornamentation, and which fitted her perfectly. She seemed to have recovered entirely from the effects of her last ride. Towards ten Mrs. Gresham appeared, and Mary immediately devoted herself to the serious task that had brought her there. She was very particular in her selections, and half an hour more passed before she had completed her purchases. We kept up, during the while, a half conversation, and I asked Mary when she thought of riding again. That it seemed to me that I remembered her dropping her whip just as I helped her off her horse, and that I thought that if we rode there the next morning that we might find it. That before breakfast would be a good time to go, say at six o'clock. Between intervals of examining some different varieties of roses she answered that she would go if she felt well enough, and that if she did not she would send me a note later in the day. I said that I would be on the beach until seven and then asked her if she would not let me send her a new bridle. She replied that I could select one for her if I would promise to send the bill with it. I protested against this, for, though I did not say so, I felt that as I had ruined her bridle it was only my duty to get her a new one, but, as I could not explain this to her, I was compelled at last to agree to do as she said.

At the gate we separated, and I went to the gymnasium and exercised until I was tired out, for it was the only way that I could keep my spirits within reasonable bounds. From the gymnasium I went to Howland's. He was just going to lunch, so I accepted his invitation to join him. He congratulated me on my heroic action of the previous Saturday, and from him I learned that the story of my ride was all over town, and that for the first time since the poker game my stock had risen above zero. I noticed this myself, as we walked out of the restaurant, in the different way that the men greeted me. I had not been down town since the previous Friday. Then, while they had all saluted me, there had been more or less constraint about it: now it was spontaneous. I spent a few minutes chatting with them, then went to a saddler's and selected Mary a new bridle. The remainder of the afternoon and evening I spent in my room writing.

I had been on the beach about half an hour the next morning riding slowly up and down to the westward of Tremont street before Mary joined me. She was dressed in her riding suit, except the hat, and in place of which she wore a little steamer cap which was decidedly becoming. "My horse don't like his new bridle at all," she said, as she rode up, "he thinks that it is too heavy."

"It will hold him, anyhow," I answered, and I wheeled Queen around and continued westward

by her side. "Does it feel strange to be on horse-back again?"

"No, I am surprised; I was almost afraid to mount this morning; but now it seems as if last Saturday was only a dream."

We rode along rapidly for the next few minutes, for the morning was rather chilly, only exchanging an occasional word. Mary's horse was a pacer and kept up with Queen easily. As we neared the sand hill Mary's breathing became quicker, as I could see by the movement of her breast, and she stopped speaking entirely. We mounted the sand hill, and paused a moment on the top. We looked down, and there, just on the other side, lay her whip, half buried in the sand. We rode down into the hollow, and I dismounted and handed Mary her whip. "Shall we rest here awhile?" I asked.

"I expect we had better," she answered, "I am beginning to feel a little tired."

I helped her to dismount, and we looked around for a seat. There was a half buried trunk of a tree, which had been cast up by the waves years before, and on this she sat down, while I fastened her horse to a stunted salt cedar which grew a few yards off. Queen I left untied. Mary noticed this, and said, as I took my seat beside her, "Will not your horse run away?"

"Queen? run away? never: Look," and I called to her. She came instantly, and, bending her head,

tried to reach my pocket. I put my arm around her neck, and pressed her to me, while with my other hand I took a lump of sugar from my pocket and fed her. Then I released her and turned to Mary. "You see," I said, "she is a woman, and therefore likes sweet things."

"How wise you are," Mary answered, and her voice was slightly sarcastic, "and you think you understand women, do you?"

"Not in the least," I replied quickly. "If I lived a million years I could never pass a certain point. I can tell generally whether they are honest or dishonest, or true or false, or bright or silly, but when it comes to the distinctly woman part of them I give up; even those I have known most intimately were constantly springing surprises on me. Do you think that I imagine that I understand you?"

Mary laughed: "If you did you would be wiser than I am, for I have found that I don't even understand myself. But what a beautiful horse you have; and is it true that you really rode it all the way from New Orleans?"

"Yes, it is true—— Do you believe in fate?"

"Fate! I hardly know; sometimes."

"It is a thing that puzzles me. Of course I do not believe in any of the religions—the mythology of the Christians is something too unutterably silly for anyone with even a partial education to put any faith in—but sometimes it seems to me that there is some great force pervading the

universe which has an influence on our actions—though, after all, it may be merely luck.”

Mary did not answer me immediately; but amused herself by drawing figures on the sand with the end of her riding whip: when she did it was with a half laugh. “I hope that it is not luck,” she said, “but that it is a very good fate, and that it has me especially in its charge, for I know that I am not guiding myself now.” She stopped and continued her drawing on the sand. I watched her for a minute or two, but the figures she traced were meaningless to me. Presently she got up. “Let us start home,” she said, “I am rested now.” We mounted our horses and rode back slowly, talking but little on the way. The beach was absolutely deserted. At Thirtieth street we separated, after making an engagement for the following morning, I turning towards town, and she continuing along the beach. I said that I wished to pass Mrs. Gresham’s. It was a transparent fiction, but she accepted it without comment.

IX.

The hours now began to go quickly. No further reference was made to our peculiar compact. We met every morning on the beach. The weather was perfect. Sometimes we rode the whole morning hour without stopping, and sometimes we would spend the hour seated on the fallen tree hidden in our nook among the sand hills. I could not tell by Mary's manner whether I was progressing or not. There was only one thing that I could construe in my favor; whereas, at first, there were frequently long pauses in our conversations, now the time never seemed long enough for us to tell all that we had to say. We discussed every conceivable subject, except the one nearest to my heart. I grew more desperately in love every day. I lived only in that one hour with her. Miss Wallace had almost passed from my thoughts. I had called on her only once since our rides began. We had met absolutely no one whom we knew.

Two weeks had passed, and it was the morning of Easter Sunday. We met early, and Mary told me that she would not be able to ride the next day, but would meet me at ten o'clock on the Avenue L street car line at the east end of the beach; one of the most quiet spots in town. We rode but a short distance this morning, and separated early, to see each other again at church, though, of course, without speaking.

When I reached the Episcopal church, a little after eleven, it was crowded to the doors, so I did not go in. By a tacit convention everybody seemed to have chosen it as their place of worship this morning. I strolled around until twelve, and then returned to await the exit of the people. A number of the young men of the town were gathered around the church door dressed in their new spring suits and straw hats. I joined one of the groups, in which was Howland, and we spent the intervening time gossiping. Howland and I had been drawing together again during the past two weeks. It was nearly one before the worshipers, principally women decked in every variety of headgear, began pouring out. In the middle of the throng I saw Mary and Ewing. As they passed me she bowed, and Ewing also raised his hat, though with by no means a pleasant expression. A little later Miss Wallace came out, and Howland and I joined her. I walked with them to the corner, and Miss Wallace invited me to a card party at her house the next night.

When I awoke Monday morning it was still dark. I looked out of the window and saw that it was raining. I got up and took my bath and then went to bed again. The weather depressed me. We were now in the first days of April. I did not get up again until seven, and then dressed slowly, and afterwards lingered a long time over breakfast. At nine the rain changed to a light drizzle, and a cold, damp wind from the north sprang up, though

the sky still remained a dull leaden gray. It was a sudden relapse into winter. I put on a rough coat with a high collar and a heavy pair of shoes and, with the hat I had used on my ride from New Orleans, started out at half past nine to keep my engagement with Mary. I hardly expected her to come out on such a day, but of course would take no chances. It was rather less than a mile to the end of the car line, so I walked to keep down my restlessness. There was, at the end, an old abandoned pavilion, which, before the jetties had ruined the east end, had been used as a beer-garden. Under the lee of this I waited, stepping out from time to time, as I heard the rattle of the cars, to look for Mary. It was nearly half past ten before she came, so bundled up in her water-proof as to be almost unrecognizable. I helped her off the car, and as soon as I looked at her I saw that something had happened. Her face was without a sign of color, and all her vivacity was gone. I took her arm, for the wind was blowing strongly, and led her to the sheltered place where I had been waiting for her. The gulf was high, and was beating against the beach with a dull, muffled roar. I waited for her to begin, but she only leaned against the wall and looked seaward. Gradually I fell in with her mood, and the minutes passed in silence. Once or twice she looked at me, and her face wore an expression that I had never seen on it before, and which at the time I did not understand. It seemed to me to be more womanly. Presently from the

distance came the sound of the electric car, and then she spoke: "I must go back on this," she said, "I only came to keep my engagement. I will explain to you sometime. Don't ask me anything now."

I made some reply, and then she took my arm, and we walked back to the car track. The drizzle had stopped, and the wind was clearing the sky. Just as I helped her on the car there came a rift in the clouds, and a faint gleam of sunshine broke through. She turned as the car started and smiled good-by, and her smile seemed to have a promise in it.

During the course of the day I received a note from Miss Wallace asking me to bring a Miss Peters, a sort of general utility girl, to her house that night, and saying that she had already made the engagement for me. It was very thoughtful of her, as I had been nowhere since the poker game, and my first public appearance in society would be sure to excite comment, and, personally, I would not have asked any of my former acquaintances for fear of a refusal.

The time mentioned was eight o'clock, and when I arrived there a few minutes after that hour with Miss Peters, I found most of the guests already assembled. Mary was there, the center of a little group, and seemed to be in the highest spirits. Ewing, to my surprise, was not present. The game we were to play was progressive euchre. It began shortly after my arrival, and I remember that I

started at the head table where the drawing of the numbers had also placed Howland and Miss Wallace. Howland had superintended the drawing, so I do not suppose that his being there was altogether luck. Mary was several tables lower down. The game progressed as such games usually do. I won twice, and then was sent down to the bottom table. I felt but little interest in it; my thoughts were centered on Mary, and I tried to watch her without seeming to do so.

The last round was being played before I caught up with her, and by the rule of the game she became my partner. She greeted me as she would have greeted any other acquaintance, and told me that we must surely win the hand as it would give her the first prize. I forget now who our opponents were. We won very easily, and, as the bell rang to show that the game was over, the usual hum of conversation arose, and most of the players left their seats to compare score cards, and to see who were the winners. Mary arose with the others, and, as she passed me, said, "Be sure to see me before you go," then, with a sudden smile, added, "the cat is out of the bag." The next moment she was in the midst of the crowd triumphantly showing her score card.

"The cat is out of the bag," there was no mistaking what she meant. Then I remembered that during the game, while at one of the tables, her sister Ellen had been seated at my left, and that she had seemed even more frigid than usual. I had

hardly thought of it at the time, as war had long been declared between us, and we never recognized each other when we met.

Supper was over, and the people were saying good night, before Mary called me to her side with a glance. She dropped her handkerchief as I approached, and, as I stooped to pick it up, said: "I will ride to-morrow early if it don't rain, and if it does I will buy some flowers." Then she said, "Thank you," with a society-girl air, as I handed her her handkerchief, and walked over to where Miss Wallace was standing. Howland passed just then, and I invited him to ride home with me. He accepted, and I got my hat and overcoat, and hunted up Miss Peters to take her home.

When I joined Howland again in the carriage, after seeing Miss Peters safely in her house, I found that he had already lighted his cigar, and was leaning back in the seat smoking vigorously. As soon as I entered he asked with great earnestness, "Graham, would you like to see an ass, a blind, a stupidly blind unmitigated ass?"

"Oh, I'm not particularly curious," I answered, "but I will light a match if you wish."

"To think that this thing has been going on since last Christmas," he continued, without noticing my remark, "since last June, by Jove, and that I never noticed it. And I would not have noticed it now if Miss Wallace had not called my attention to it to-night. What an oyster you are."

I guessed instantly what he meant—Mary's

words had prepared me for anything—but I did not care to give myself away until I was certain, so I asked him as indifferently as I could to explain.

“Graham, Graham,” he continued, still without heeding me, “and to think that I have been madly jealous of you; that for two weeks past I have been gloating inwardly over how badly you would feel when you heard that Miss Wallace and I were engaged; that every time we have met lately I have been trying to lacerate your feelings by my covert remarks: oh, what an ass I have been. And now tell me the truth about yourself and Mary Andrews.”

We talked until late into the night, or, rather, morning. It was a relief to me to talk about Mary with somebody. I told him everything—nearly. He had not much encouragement to give me. He had heard much less than I thought; only that Mary and I had been seen twice riding on the beach together in the morning; but that after Miss Wallace had spoken to him that night he had been watching me closely, and that I had given myself away a dozen times.

“I wonder if Mr. Andrews has been told,” I asked, finally, as I was leaving.

“I am pretty certain he has not,” Howland answered, “as he left yesterday morning to visit his sugar plantation, and what I have told you Miss Wallace only heard to-day, and if it was being discussed generally I would certainly have heard it myself down town; but you know Galveston, and

you can count on having everybody gossiping about you before the week is over; my advice is not to delay, but to make hay while the sun shines."

It was so near morning when I got home that I did not think it worth while to go to bed, but, after taking a bath, put on my riding suit, and read until daylight. It came in about half an hour, and I went down stairs and saddled Queen. I had already started towards the beach when I changed my mind and decided to wait for Mary. I rode around the block once or twice, until I saw her horse brought around to the side gate, when I waited on the corner until she came out. As soon as she reached the side-walk I rode up, and dismounting, assisted her into the saddle. She did not seem at all surprised to see me, and after we had started, said, "I was sure that you would wait for me this morning."

"It is a case of mental telepathy," I answered, "I had not thought of waiting until after I had started for the beach. You must have been just awakening when I changed my mind."

"Hardly," she answered, "as I was awake hours and hours this morning before I got up."

Then I told her how I had spent the night, though I did not tell her that she had been the subject of conversation.

We rode rather slowly along Tremont street, but when we reached the beach we let our horses out and did not stop until we reached the sand hills. It was a beautiful morning, and the sun was just

rising when we dismounted. Mary took her favorite seat on a branch of the old tree which rose a few feet from the ground, and I stood beside her trying to decide, as I often did, whether her eyes were blue or gray. I never could, as they were not always the same color, changing from light to dark with her varying moods. Somehow she reminded me of Undine—before her soul came to spoil her. She had been my earliest sweetheart, and I had always hated the knight. But the coming of her soul would not ruin Mary—and it seemed to me that it had drawn nearer during the last two days. She was very silent this morning, and after a moment or two I walked over to Queen, and began feeding her with some sweet crackers that I had brought with me. I was teaching her to catch them in her mouth as I tossed them to her, and she was not yet very skillful. I grew so interested in this that I almost forgot Mary, until she called me to her side. I sat down on the trunk of the tree, a little below her, and waited. I thought at first that she was merely jealous of my attentions to Queen, for she always liked to occupy the center of the stage; but when I looked at her more closely, I saw that she had grown serious. She hesitated several times before she spoke, but at last she said, "Do you think it is wrong for a girl to hate her sister?"

"It depends a good deal on the sister," I answered. "I know how I would feel in your case."

"It is years since Ellen and I have been intimate,"

she continued, "but now I can never forgive her. Would you believe it? she was on the same street car that I was on yesterday morning. She followed me from the house, but I was thinking of other things and did not notice her—not that it would have made any difference in my actions if I had. When I came home I found her just going into mama's room. We entered almost at the same moment——" here Mary gave a little laugh of inward amusement—"what followed was very funny. Ellen started to denounce me dramatically; 'Mother,' she said, 'do you know where Mary has been?' 'No;' mama answered, 'but I think that I can guess.' 'You cannot,' Ellen exclaimed, 'but I can tell you; she has been——' well I wont repeat exactly what she said; but she should never have said it, and it is that, as much as her playing the spy, that makes me feel that I can never forgive her—then mama answered, 'Yes, Ellen, I know everything that Mary has done, and she has had my permission.' This disconcerted Ellen for a moment, but presently she began again, and said that if mama would do nothing that she would write to father. There were lots of other things said—it seems that one of the men had told Ellen the day before that he had seen us out riding together, which was the reason that she had followed me—and finally we had an awful quarrel, and Ellen and I are never to speak to each other again."

Mary paused a moment, and, when she recommenced, her mood had changed. "I have been

very wrong, though—everything has been wrong—but then my position has been so difficult. If you had ever tried to take the least advantage of it—do you know that two or three times I have deliberately tried to lead you on so that I could have an excuse to quarrel with you?”

I laughed, for just then Howland's confession of the night before occurred to me, and I thought how blissfully I had been moving along utterly unconscious of the various plots of which I had been the object—some special providence must surely have been guiding me, or I would have stranded on one of the many shoals. I told Mary something of this, and she agreed with me about the providence part.

“You cannot imagine the fire of criticism you have been under at our home,” she said. “First, there was the public part. Hardly a day passed that my father or Ellen did not have something to say against you. My father really believes that you have not a redeeming trait. And there was another criticism of you which was even harder, though it wasn't—exactly—unfriendly. I have never told you how, after the first Sunday, I repeated all our conversation to mama, and that, every time we have met since then, I have confided everything to her. Mama likes you; why, I don't know; but she does, and she generally takes your part, while I act as the severe critic; if you had ever done anything wrong——” she paused

abruptly, and then asked after an interval; "What hour is this?"

"The seventeenth," I answered.

"Seven and seven make fourteen—twenty-four. To-day is Tuesday—are you going to Miss Morgan's to-night?"

I answered that I had not been invited.

"Will you go if I get you an invitation?"

"Certainly," I answered.

"Then I will see you there. And now let's ride home slowly as I must rest for to-night."

My invitation to Miss Morgan's came during the morning—I think that I have mentioned her as a stupid girl who entertained a great deal—and I was one of the first of her guests to arrive. I waited in the dressing-room until the programs were given out, when I went down stairs. Mary, as usual, was surrounded by men. When I reached her side, and finally secured her program, I found that every dance was taken. It was plainly intentional, as she could easily have saved me a dance if she had wished to. My hopes had risen so high since morning, that now the reaction was correspondingly deep. I handed her back the program without a word, and turned and left her. She did not look at me, but continued chatting with the other men. A week or so before—until the last two days—I might have tried to answer her in kind, and have ignored her for the rest of the evening; but now my feelings had grown too deep for me to disguise

them, so I left the room and the house without a word to anyone. It was still not much after nine, and the night was warm. My hackman had driven away.

As I hesitated which way to turn my demon came beside me and led my steps towards the nearest bar-room. I entered and bought a bottle of whiskey and a bunch of cigars, and with them returned to my room. I placed them on my table and lit my lamp. My knife had a cork-screw attachment, and with this I opened the bottle, and then filled a tumbler half way to the brim with the whiskey. Then I cut off the end of a cigar, and laid it beside the glass. I sat down, and for two long hours did not move. For two long hours I sat there, while the mosquitoes sung around me, and fought the last battle of my life with the demon of drink; then I got up, and, taking the cigars and whiskey, walked over to the washstand and threw them into the slop-bucket. Then, dressed as I was, I left the house, and spent the remainder of the night wandering around town. It was nearly daylight when I returned home, absolutely exhausted, but once more at peace with myself. I went to bed and slept for many hours. It was nearly evening when I awoke. I went down town and got some dinner and then returned to my room. Mary had led up to my downfall so skillfully that it had come upon me when I was least prepared; but I had met the crisis, and passed it, and now I knew that I would never drink again. A sort of numbness

had come over my feelings, and I no longer felt any inclination to renew the struggle. And my feelings themselves had undergone a change. Mary's last act had been such a useless bit of cruelty that I could not pardon her for it. A girl who could wantonly insult a man—one, even as much to blame as I was—could not be worth the winning. I would see her once more: on the last day, Tuesday; but beyond that I made no plans. Still, I could feel that a change was in the air, and that night, almost involuntarily, I began arranging my papers—saving some and burning many. The next day I continued my preparations. I had gathered a great quantity of stuff, and to pack this involved much labor. I did not go out all day.

Friday morning, very early, I took a short, fast ride on the beach, returning before seven. Shortly after breakfast I received a visit from Howland. I was in my room again finishing my packing. I was surprised to see him, and still more surprised when he told me the object of his call. There was to be a subscription dance that night at the Garten Verein, to be given by the men, and he wished me not only to subscribe, but to also go there and to take Miss Wallace. I declined, explaining that I was about to leave town, and that I had decided to go to no more entertainments. But he would accept no excuse. My name was already down on the list as Miss Wallace's escort, and had been there since the day before. He had placed it there himself when he found that his own engage-

ments would not permit him to take her. Everybody who had seen the list knew that I was going with her, and it would place her in a very embarrassing position if I should now refuse. If it had been anybody else I would not have hesitated, but she had been so steadily my friend that I could not well decline to put myself to some inconvenience for her sake, and so I reluctantly consented. Howland then proposed that we should share a hack together—a prevailing custom in Galveston to save expense—and to this I readily agreed. He would get the hack, he said, and call for me about half past eight.

By five that afternoon I had everything packed, except the few articles that I would need for the remaining days of my stay in Galveston, and I decided to visit the cemetery again, and say good-bye to my friend George. His tomb had not changed, though the grass around it was greener. I stayed with him, thinking, until the lengthening shadows told me that evening had come, when I returned to my boarding house, and, after dining, dressed for the dance. It was to be an informal affair, so, as the night was very warm, I put on a light flannel suit that I had left out of my trunk for the purpose. Howland was rather late in arriving, and I was beginning to congratulate myself that I might escape after all, when, through the open window by which I was sitting, I saw the carriage drive up. I picked up my hat and went down stairs, meeting Howland at the gate. We walked to the

hack together and I stepped in first. He followed me closely, and shut the door. It was quite dark inside, and I was about to take the rear seat when I saw a woman's dress. I apologized, though I could not recognize who it was, and sat down in front. The carriage started. As my eyes grew more accustomed to the darkness I saw that the other seat was also occupied, and that the dress I had first seen belonged to Miss Wallace. "How is this," I asked, "I thought you were going with me to-night?"

"The program has been changed," she answered, while from the other dress came a low laugh. I sank back in my seat, for once in my life, at least, absolutely incapable of either speech or action—for the other dress belonged to Mary. I don't remember anything very distinctly, now, until I found myself walking along the shaded path in the Garten Verein which led to the dancing pavilion with her beside me. I had to keep turning every moment to assure myself that she was really real. She was dressed all in white, as on the day I had first seen her, and it brought the whole scene vividly back to my mind. I did not try to think how it had happened—I could not have thought if I had tried—sufficient it was that she was with me. The events of the past three days passed from my mind—the present moment only was real.

We had almost reached the pavilion when I noticed, as she slowly swung her fan, that her program was attached to it. There had been a

box of them in the carriage with Howland, but I had not thought of taking one. It caused me a moment's bitterness, but I threw the feeling from me: nothing should spoil to-night if I could help it. I took her program from her. "Can I write my name down now?" I asked.

"If you want," she answered, smiling.

I took the little pencil which was attached to the card, and, turning the program sideways, wrote my name so as to cover both of the interior pages on which the names of the dances were printed. I expected each instant that she would stop me, but she did not. I handed her back her fan and program, but she asked me to keep them, so I detached the latter and put it in my pocket. What it meant I did not know, but it was not for me to complain.

The musicians were tuning up as we entered the pavilion. Howland and Miss Wallace were already there. We took a seat in front of one of the windows through which a warm breeze was blowing. A number of men came up to ask for dances, but to one and all Mary made the same reply—that her program was already full.

The first piece was a two-step, and, as the music started, Mary and I took our places on the floor. I put my arm around her, and so we stood for a moment or two while waiting to catch the time. As I touched her hand my whole body thrilled with excitement: I longed to press her to me; it

was almost a relief when the right note came and we glided on the floor.

Even now this dance seems to me like a dream. I was conscious of but one thing--that she was in my arms. Once, as we were passing one of the doors, we both happened to look up at the same time. There stood Ellen, glaring at us with vindictive eyes. I gave Mary's hand the slightest pressure, and she pressed mine in return.

Dance after dance followed. Gradually I could feel that we were creating a sensation. The quarrel of the family with me had been notorious, and but few knew of the reconciliation which had taken place between Mary and myself. More than once, as some of the other dancers passed us, I could catch parts of whispered comments, and some of them were not favorable: to dance every dance with the same man was more than the strict little society of Galveston could allow. But what Galveston could or could not allow was a matter of perfect indifference to me, and Mary seemed unconscious of the attention she was attracting.

But I was mistaken in this, for as we left the pavilion, after the last dance before supper, she whispered to me in a voice half frightened, half laughing, "I have taken my life in my hands to-night: what, oh, what, will happen to-morrow." She imagined as little as I did then of what was to happen the next day.

The supper was to be served on the wide verandas

of the club-house, and we took our seats at one of the little tables furthest removed from the crowd. There we were presently joined by Howland and Miss Wallace. We had nearly finished, when Howland, who had been toying abstractedly with his wine glass, turned to me suddenly and said, "I suppose that the debate, *a la Persian*, is now ended."

At first I did not understand him; then I remembered the night nearly five months back when we four had last sat together at the same table. How wonderfully things had changed since then. It made me serious instantly. A moment passed before I answered him. Then I said slowly, "Yes. Howland, forever."

Mary raised her eyes to mine, and once more I saw the girl who had spoken to me on the beach that June day, and who had changed the current of my life.

The supper ended. The girls left us for a moment, and Howland lit a cigar. I watched him curiously as he luxuriously filled his lungs with smoke, and then slowly puffed it out in little wreaths, and was surprised to find that my desire for tobacco had left me entirely, and that I rather pitied him than otherwise. We did not speak, and presently the girls rejoined us. Mary and I left the club-house and strolled out under the trees. It was a beautiful night; the clouds of the early evening had passed away, and the moon was shining brightly. We turned from the dancing pavilion, and towards

the quietest spot of the garden. In a recess formed by the thick vines of a honeysuckle we found a bench, and here sat down. I felt that the crisis had arrived. I turned to Mary and said: "Tell me, now, what does this mean?"

She withdrew a little way from me, "Not to-night," she answered, "to-night I don't want to think—to-morrow I will tell you everything."

But I knew that to-morrow would be another day—that only the present moment was mine. I told her this; but she only repeated after me, "Yes, to-morrow will be another day."

Just then the faint sound of a bell was borne to our ears by the wind, then a second and a third; I counted, the city clock was striking twelve, and another day had come.

"Do you hear, Mary," I said, "to-day has passed and it is to-morrow: now tell me everything."

Her breath began to come quickly, and she turned her face from mine, "No, not to-night," she answered. "Don't ask me to-night; in the morning early—as early as you wish, we will ride to the sand hills together; but to-night I am in a dream."

But I had passed the limit of my self-control. The tension I had been under for the last three days had been too great—the hope of Tuesday morning—the despair of Tuesday night—my struggle with myself: then the three days of dull self-control, and now the dawning of hope again—I could not wait. The new day had already begun, and before

the darkness passed I would have an answer from Mary. I took her hand in mine and drew her towards me. I put my arm around her waist. She did not resist, though she did not yield. A moment passed, then she turned towards me and looked into my face. I saw that her eyes were filled with tears. In that instant the whole character of my love changed. The passion seemed to die out, and in its place there came an affection so deep, so overwhelming, that I felt that I had never before even dreamed of the true meaning of the word love. Mayhap the change showed in my eyes, for suddenly Mary put her arms around my neck, and, leaning forward, rested her head on my shoulder. For a moment I became so weak that I could hardly support her. Then the feeling passed and all my blood rushed to my heart and it felt as if it would burst. I drew her gently towards me and pressed her to my breast, and kissed her on the forehead and on the eyes and on the lips. A minute passed in silence. Now that my happiness had come to me I could not realize it. Each second I expected to see her fade away and vanish.

It was the commonplace, as usual, which broke the spell. There came the sound of steps crushing the gravel path which led to our seat. Mary straightened up suddenly and started to her feet, then sank down again with a half guilty laugh. I caught her hand and held it while we waited with beating hearts for the arrival of the

intruders. They passed within a few yards of us, but did not turn—they were Ewing and Miss Morgan. He must have come very late for I had not seen him inside of the pavilion. I had forgotten his existence. Now I remembered everything. I turned to Mary. She was leaning back in her seat nervously fumbling with the buckle of her belt. A sort of cloud passed across my brain. I wanted to speak, but could not. I must have pressed the hand which I was holding roughly, for she gave a little cry and drew it away. It brought me to myself instantly. I slipped from my seat and knelt before her, and, taking her hand again in mine, kissed it. "Forgive me, dearest," I said, "but Ewing—you are engaged to him?"

She took my other hand in hers and drew me towards her. "Sit next to me," she said, "I have so much to tell you; but first—are you sure that you love me?"

I kissed her hand again.

"Our engagement was formally broken Easter Sunday. It was broken once before in January, but we renewed it again. But it was never a real engagement in—this way. I never was in the least in love with him. Can you understand? You don't know what a selfish, worldly, cold-blooded girl I am. I was commencing my fourth season out—and people were beginning to speak of me as one of the old girls—and Mr. Ewing was rich—and—and—oh! I'm thoroughly contemptible, but it was just vanity which made me

accept him. But I never let him kiss me—believe me, I never let him kiss me. I have always hated kisses, and I never knew what a real kiss meant until that day on the beach when my horse ran away and you saved me. You thought that I had fainted, but I had not, though, at the moment, I lacked the strength to even open my eyes. But I felt you kiss me and heard your words and then—Oh! Graham, then I knew that I could never marry Mr. Ewing. And since then I have treated him as badly as I could. And Easter Sunday he gave me the opportunity that I wanted. Do you remember that I bowed to you that day? Well, he told me that I should not, and we had a quarrel, and he broke the engagement—I wanted to make him break it so that I would be free from all responsibility.”

I sank back in my seat; never before had I realized so clearly how little I understood women; she had made up her mind from the first to accept me.

She seemed to read my thoughts for her next words were: “Don’t think that I was in love with you then—I wasn’t—I do not believe that I know what love is—I only knew that I could not marry Mr. Ewing. But I hated you, too. I was rather happy until you came into my life; then you unsettled everything. You seemed always to be forcing me against my will. I loved society, and to be rich, and admiration, and I could feel that you despised me for these things—and it was then that I began hating you.” Suddenly she looked

at me and smiled. "Did I hurt you that night last summer when you told me good-by at the gate? I wanted to; I was feeling such contempt for myself, and was so sorry that you were going away that I had to make somebody suffer. I regretted what I said a minute afterwards and ran to the gate to call you back, but when I got there you were gone. Did I hurt you much?"

"No," I answered, "some blows are so severe that for the time they deaden all your feelings, and when I did begin to think of your words they aroused me and it was then that I made up my mind to return here and win you if I could. It was what you told me that night at Miss Wallace's that nearly ruined me—the night of my return when you said that you were engaged to Ewing. But don't let's speak of it—it is past now, thank God—tell me instead when you first stopped hating me."

"I never really hated you, you know, the trouble was that I liked you too much. Oh, how can I explain! Do you remember years and years ago—a day that I spent at your house. I fell in love with you desperately then—you realized all my ideals. I had never seen any one so handsome or so clever. I had often noticed you before, but you would never speak to me. Then you left and I went away to school, but still I thought of you constantly. It was when I came home that I began to forget you. I was grown up then and out in society and men were to be had in plenty. I was no longer the poor little school-girl whose

love nobody cared for. But you still had a place in my mind, and on rainy days, sometimes, I would take you out and look at you. But you had ceased to be a real person, and had become only a memory. Then came that day last summer when I met you on the beach. For one moment, when I first saw you, I seemed to step back into the past. But it was only for a moment. Time had changed us both, and you made me feel that I had deteriorated, and it was then that I began to hate you, and to wish you hurt whenever I could. Oh, Graham, can it be that you really love me—myself—or is it not that you only love the girl that you imagine me to be?"

"It is you, yourself, that I love, Mary, not the society girl, Miss Andrews. Since I looked into your eyes that day and saw you as you really were you have never been out of my thoughts. I believe that I loved you from that moment, though I did not know it at the time. My life before had been without an object and as reckless as a man's life could be, but from that day it began to change. It was only when my love for you seemed hopeless that I fell back for a time into my old routine; but truly my pleasure in it had gone. And since one night on my trip from New Orleans I have done nothing in thought or deed that I could not tell you, for—" I stopped abruptly: an ugly vision suddenly arose before me. I saw myself as I had appeared on the night before her horse had run away. I hesitated—should I tell her or should

I not? but her head was resting on my shoulder, and at the moment I did not have the courage; instead, I drew her closely to me and kissed her on the lips. She suffered me to do it; but that was all. A moment or so passed. She knitted her fingers and pressed her hands together in her lap, then she raised her face to mine and said, "Graham, I am afraid. I don't believe that I have the power to love as you do. In imagination I used to picture out love scenes, but they were all so different from this——" she laughed suddenly, "I suppose this is a love scene, isn't it?"

I laughed too, and kissed her again, and this time she yielded a little more; "I suppose it is," I answered.

Just then the faint sound of a waltz came to us through the trees, and Mary started up. "We must go back," she said.

"No, not yet," I protested, though I got up also, "we have settled nothing." But she would not listen to me, and after a word or two more we returned to the pavilion and joined the dancers on the floor. After the dance we took a seat next to one of the windows where we were presently joined by Howland and Miss Wallace. Mary asked them if they were not ready to go home. Her mother was not very well, she said, and she had promised to return early. They were willing, so I went out to find our hack. It was nowhere in sight, however, so I returned to the pavilion. The music was just beginning again. We decided to dance one piece more, and then, if the hackman

had not yet arrived, to walk home. Howland now insisted that he had been treated badly and that Miss Andrews owed him a dance.

"Can I," she whispered to me, "I really ought to, and you should dance with Miss Wallace."

So it was arranged, and Miss Wallace and I danced together. I did not imagine it then, but it was the last dance that I was ever to have in Galveston—and it was not with Mary.

A two-step was played. As soon as we were on the floor, Miss Wallace whispered to me, "Are you not going to thank me for to-night?"

"For to-night," I answered, puzzled at first, "You don't mean to say that you arranged——"

She did not let me finish. "Yes, I, principally, and Mary a little—What are you going to give me?"

I guessed it all now. "I would give you my heart," I answered, smiling, "but unfortunately it is no longer mine."

She almost stopped, and we lost step, and had to wait a moment to catch the time. "Has Mary really!" she exclaimed, though in a voice hardly louder than a whisper.

"I was not speaking about Mary," I answered, "I was speaking about myself."

"Oh, how you have disappointed me," she cried, as we moved on again in time to the music, "I was in hopes that—that all your troubles were over."

"What do you know about my troubles?" I demanded.

"Oh, Mr. Howland has told me everything; I am training him not to have any secrets from me; and I know that he has told you about us."

"He has," I answered, "and I have already congratulated him. For you, of course, I feel sorry."

"Don't joke, please, or I will not help you any more with Mary, though I like to encourage the love affairs of young people—Why did you not speak to her to-night?"

Here a couple jostled us, for I was guiding badly, and I was able to escape answering. I was glad, as the conversation rather grated on me. A moment later the music stopped and we joined Mary and Howland. The girls gathered their wraps and we left the hall. Our hack was not in sight so we started immediately on our walk homeward. It was not very far and the night was pleasant. Mary and I walked behind, but the others were so close to us most of the time that intimate conversation was impossible. At her gate they left us. We did not speak until they were some distance away. Then I asked Mary when her father would return.

"He was to return to-night," she answered, "he is probably already home now."

"Then I will see him to-morrow."

"Oh, Graham, don't—and yet—yes, you had better see him. Ellen has written to him, I think."

She stopped and looked down for a moment, then she took my hands in hers, and, turning to me, continued: "Graham, are you absolutely sure of yourself? You don't know what a terrible risk you are taking in asking me to marry you. I have been spoiled for the last four years, and——"

I bent and kissed her hands: "I would take any risk in the world to have you," I answered. "I have already risked——" again I was about to tell her my secret, but she interrupted me: "And then I fear for myself. To-night has destroyed my self-confidence. The reason I hurried back to the pavilion was that I did not dare to stay with you alone a moment longer. I know now that I can love—love with as much passion as any woman in the world. And if I should give myself to you—you knowing me as little as you do—and later you should find me out, and cease to love me, my life would be ruined forever. Do not let us make any promises now, but wait—wait until we know each other better."

We had been standing on the inside of the gate where the moon flooded us with light, now we walked forward a few steps until we were under the shadow of the trees. "I will wait for you as long as you want, Mary," I said, "but I think that we had better be engaged. Then I can have a right to speak to your father to-morrow. Something must be arranged as we cannot continue as we have been doing. Tell me, can I speak to him?"

She drew closer to me and looked into my eyes,

"Tell me once more," she said, "on your soul, are you sure that you love me?"

"Mary," I answered, "on my soul, I love you better than my life—better than anything in this world or beyond—if there is a beyond."

"Then you can speak to my father to-morrow."

I drew her to me. "Will you not kiss me once?" I asked.

She raised her face to mine, and, as I kissed her on the lips, she put her arms around my neck and kissed me in return. There is but one such kiss in the world. Some few have felt it, and it has marked an epoch in their lives; but to the most it must forever remain unknown.

X.

I awoke rather later than usual the next morning, and so, before dressing, wrote a short note to Mr. Andrews asking him if I could see him at his house at ten o'clock. I sent the note by my stable-boy with instructions not to wait for an answer. I then bathed and dressed. About eight the answer came. I read it before going to breakfast. It was very brief and formal, but it stated that Mr Andrews would see me at the hour indicated. I had very hard work killing the time until ten o'clock. I tried to read, but I could not fix my mind on the book. Then I paid Queen a short visit, and afterwards walked slowly to the beach and back. I still had ten minutes to spare. I took another slow walk around the block, looking at my watch every few seconds, until, at a minute to ten, I rang the bell of Mr. Andrews' house. The door was opened almost immediately, and I entered the wide hall way and was shown by the servant into the drawing-room which opened into it. Mr. Andrews was standing near the center of the room, and seated by one of the windows was Mary. I was surprised to see her, but her presence helped me, for the nervousness which I had felt on entering the room left me, and I was able to meet Mr. Andrews on equal terms. I bowed to them both, but Mary alone returned my bow. She rose from her seat, also, and, crossing the room, took my hand and

pressed it lightly for an instant. Then she turned to her father and said, "Do you still insist upon my staying in this room?"

"Yes," he answered, "I do; I wish this matter to be settled at once." Then he turned to me. "I received your letter this morning. I would have declined to have any communication with a person of your character had not my daughter told me that you have had the insolence to propose marriage to her and that she had accepted. Now I want to tell you what I have already told her, that before I die or after she will not receive one cent of my fortune unless she marries a man I approve of, and I positively forbid her to marry you."

I listened in perfect silence, for my poker training stood me in good stead, and was able to ask in a voice that had not a tremor in it when he had finished, "And she has said?"

The question disconcerted him. He hesitated a moment before he answered. When he spoke it was evident that he was growing angry. "What my daughter may or may not have said is immaterial: it is to you that I am speaking now." He hesitated again, then he continued: "I have a proposition to make to you—if you will leave this town to-day I will give you a thousand dollars—if you stay and my daughter is fool enough to marry you, you will get absolutely nothing."

He misjudged me so absolutely that his offer scarcely made me angry, still I could not resist

saying in a voice, the scorn in which I made no attempt to conceal, "A thousand dollars! Really you do not value your daughter very highly."

At this he lost his self-control entirely, and made a step towards me and raised his arm as if he were about to strike, crying at the same time, "You scoundrel!"

For an instant my impulse was to knock him down. He was still a well-preserved man, not over middle age, and strongly built; but Mary was beside me, and I managed to control myself. "Listen to me, Mr. Andrews," I said, "I will not detain you a minute. The opinion you have formed of me is entirely wrong. I care nothing for the money that Mary might inherit from you—if you offered me everything you have it would still be as nothing in comparison with her. Personally I am glad to know that if she marries me she will come to me with nothing, and I believe that she really cares as little for your threat as I do. I came to you this morning because I considered it the right thing to do. You have given me your answer and have tried to insult me as well. Now I will inform you that I will marry Mary the instant I can obtain her consent."

Mary took my hand. She was trembling, and was very pale; but her eyes were firm, "Do not say anything more, Graham," she said, "father will only insult you again as he has already insulted me before you came this morning. Go, now, and I will see you some time during the day."

I turned to leave the room and Mary followed me. We had not reached the door, however, before Mr. Andrews cried, "Stop," and we paused on the threshold and faced him. He was trembling with rage, and had to struggle with his voice an instant before he could control it sufficiently to continue, then he said, hoarsely, "Mary, do you still refuse to obey my orders and give this man up?"

She gave me one long look before she answered, "Yes."

It was nearly a minute before he spoke again, during which we faced him in silence. When he did his voice was under perfect control, though his eyes still showed anger. "Think once again, Mary," he said, "it is your last chance."

"I have thought, father, and I cannot obey you in this."

"Then you leave this house to-day. I will give you one hour's time to gather your clothes and go—and go never to return. If you do I will have the servants put you out."

Her face flushed, but she controlled herself wonderfully. "That last was unnecessary, father," she said, "you need not fear that I will ever return. I will go now as soon as I tell mama good-by."

He did not answer, and we walked out of the room together. At the foot of the stairs she stopped. "Wait for me a few minutes," she said, "I will not be very long," and she started up the wide stairway. She had only gone a few steps when she turned. "No, don't wait for me inside the

house; wait for me at the side gate—and—and promise that you will not have any quarrel with my father.”

I hesitated. I dreaded to leave her alone in the house with him. She guessed my thought. “Don’t be afraid for me,” she said, “I will be perfectly safe with mama. For my sake please go now before anything happens.”

There was nothing to do but to leave the house, and she waited on the steps until I had closed the door behind me. I walked to the side gate. She was very long in coming, or at least so it seemed to me. As the minutes passed I began to grow very anxious and to imagine all sorts of horrors. I had almost decided to return to the house in spite of her command when she appeared. As soon as she drew near me I could see that she had been crying. I opened the gate quickly and she joined me outside.

“What has happened, Mary,” I asked, and I took her hands in mine.

The tears came into her eyes again. “Poor mama,” she said, “I could hardly tell her good-by. She is quite sick this morning and cannot leave her bed. Graham, I ought to stay with her.”

“If it were possible, Mary, I would say yes; but is it not too late now?”

“Yes,” she said, slowly, “it is too late now. I will never, never enter that house nor speak to my father again. And I should not even cry, for mama has given her consent to my marrying

you, and she has promised to visit us as soon as we have settled somewhere. Tell me, Graham, where are we going to live?"

I had thought that I already loved Mary as much as it was possible for a man to love, but with her last words a new vista opened before me, and I saw that as yet I was only on the threshold, for, now that she had given herself, the gift was absolute. As she looked up to me now, with perfect trust in her eyes, I could not resist the temptation, but stooped and kissed her and for the second time she kissed me in return. It was not so very improper, for the street was absolutely deserted, and we were hidden by the oleanders. She did not even blush, and no surer sign could be given of the purity of her thoughts.

"In New York," I answered, presently, "it is the only home I have now. If you are willing we will start to-day."

"To-day?"

"Yes, I think it will be best. You would not care to stay in Galveston and face all the gossip that our marriage will cause. You could not even go on the street without attracting attention."

"But to leave my mother; still—yes, I will do whatever you think best. Where are we going now?" we had been walking along slowly.

"To Miss Wallace's. I thought I would leave you there while I made arrangements for our marriage. You don't mind, do you?"

"No—yes—I believe that I am afraid. How

can I explain to her what has happened this morning?"

"You need not explain anything; she will understand—she is not nearly as frivolous as she appears on the surface."

Mary laughed. "She would be much obliged to you for saying that. Do you know, at one time I thought you were in love with her—but your case was hopeless—she has been in love with Mr. Howland for a long time. Oh, how wicked I used to be—I tried my best to get him away from her though I never cared for him in the least, and she was one of my best friends."

"Oh, Mary, Mary," I cried; "but you need not be afraid of her anger now. She and Howland have been engaged for the last two weeks."

"*Really?* I am very glad. Then I will go with you."

We had reached the gate while we had been talking, and now we entered the garden and walked to the door. It was open so we passed through and entered the drawing-room. Miss Wallace was standing by one of the windows. When she saw us she dropped some flowers that she had in her hand and gave a little dramatic start of surprise, then she ran up to Mary and kissed her. Afterwards she turned to me and said reproachfully, "Why did you not tell me last night?"

"Because last night I did not know myself. Now I want to know if you will lend me your house for a little while? We want to get married here."

Miss Wallace's jesting manner fell from her like a cloak. In an instant her arm was around Mary's waist. "Has anything serious happened, dear?" she asked.

Then Mary broke down completely and began sobbing convulsively. I could not bear it, though I knew that it was only the other girl's kindness that affected her, so, after a word to Miss Wallace to the effect that I would return immediately, I left the house.

There were many things to be attended to if we were to be married and leave for New York that day. My first call was at Howland's office. I found him in, and when I told him the object of my visit he agreed to give me the rest of the day without hesitation. We decided to divide up the work between us. I would get the railroad tickets and he the license, and somebody to marry us, then we would all meet at the court-house and drive to Miss Wallace's together. He thought that he could get the judge to perform the ceremony or, if not, would find some other legally constituted authority. I much preferred myself to have the marriage a civil one, as I disliked the idea of going through the farce of a religious ceremony. I would have consented to have done so for Mary's sake if I had not known that she was almost as much of an agnostic as I was. When we agreed on this I telephoned to Miss Wallace to expect us about twelve and spoke a word to Mary. Then Howland and I separated; I went to the bank and drew out

all my money and then went to the station. I had intended going by way of St. Louis; but on consulting the ticket agent I found that the through train had already gone, and that if we took any of the others by that route we would have a succession of tedious delays on the way. There was, however, a train for New Orleans which left at five, connecting at Houston with the Southern Pacific, to which a through sleeper was attached. The drawing-room of this was vacant, so I engaged it. From New Orleans we could go on to New York by sea or rail as we chose. The decision of this question could be left to Mary. As I paid for the tickets a most violent fear assailed me. I felt that I was doing a most reckless thing, sufficient to bring down upon me the wrath of the gods, for I was acting as if I was certain that Mary would marry me, whereas in my heart of hearts I knew that something would happen at the last moment to separate us. I decided to hedge against fate. I told the ticket agent that it was rather probable that the friend whom I expected to accompany me might not be able to go, in which case I would return the other ticket. He said that it would be all right as the law compelled them to redeem tickets and that my friend could present his ticket any day within the limit and that it would be redeemed. I thanked him and left, feeling very much ashamed of my cowardice.

On the steps of the court-house I found Howland waiting, while in front was a hack. The judge,

he said, had agreed to perform the ceremony—he had caught him by telephone—and was now waiting for us at his home; the court was not in session that day. We entered the hack and drove to his residence, and, after a short delay, he joined us. It was not quite twelve when we reached Miss Wallace's. I was dreadfully nervous by this time, and was almost afraid to go in, as I was certain that I would find Mary gone. She was not in the drawing-room when we entered, but my fears were groundless, for, after a few minutes, she came in accompanied by Miss Wallace. All traces of her tears had vanished, and she was looking more beautiful than I had ever seen her—her hair was parted in the center and brushed back in loose waves to the sides; her cheeks were faintly tinged with color, while in the depths of her eyes a wonderful light lay smouldering.

What followed during the next few minutes I hardly remember. The judge asked us a few questions and presently I was told that we were married. All that the law could do to make us husband and wife was over. Aimless conversation followed, and then lunch. It was the most disagreeable that I had ever had at that house. The judge was an ass, and thought it incumbent on himself to get off all the stock jokes which are supposed to be appropriate on such occasions. It ended after a dreary while, but then I had to leave immediately to finish packing. Howland accompanied me. Most of the work was already done,

but there were still enough odds and ends lying around to make it a tedious job. I had decided to take only my steamer trunk and valise, and to leave everything else to go on by water. Howland promised to attend to this. Then we called up another hack, as the first had taken the judge home, and while waiting for this I went to pay my landlady and to tell Queen good by. I hated to part with the latter, but I knew that I could not possibly afford to keep a horse in New York, so had decided to give her to Howland. I told him this now. At first he refused to accept her, but finally consented.

It was nearly four when I returned to Miss Wallace's. Both she and Mary were waiting for us in the drawing-room. Mary had been writing, and she now gave me a letter to send to her mother. There was still an hour before the train would leave, and in my nervous condition it was impossible for me to sit quietly through it, so I asked Mary if she would mind taking a ride on the cars to the beach to tell it a last good-by. She consented and we left the house. I gave her letter to one of the servants to deliver to Mrs. Andrews. Howland and Miss Wallace promised to meet us at the station—Howland to drive down in the hack in which I had placed my luggage. We left them at the gate, and Mary and I walked to Center street and took a car which passed the beach and returned by way of Thirty-third street. We had it almost to ourselves. It was the first time that we had been

alone together since our marriage, but we hardly spoke. Once I asked her if she had yet been able to realize that she was really married, and she answered, "No."

It was nearing five when we reached the station. Howland and Miss Wallace were awaiting us. We went direct to our car, but did not enter immediately. Howland gave me my trunk check, and told me that the rest of my baggage was inside. After a few more words good-byes were exchanged and they left us. We boarded the car and stood on the platform a moment to watch them out of sight. On reaching the corner of the street they stopped an instant and we waved our hands in farewell, then turned to go inside. Just then a hack drove past and Mary clutched my arm. I looked and saw Mrs. Andrews. I called to the hackman to stop, and, jumping down from the platform of the car, ran to open the door. Our car had not yet been coupled on to the rest of the train, and was standing alone on the opposite side of the street. There were but few people near us. I had hardly opened the door of the hack before Mary was by my side. She stepped in quickly, and I closed the door and turned away so as not to be a witness to the parting which I knew would be so desperately hard for them both. Two or three minutes passed; then there came a warning bell, and the train backed down to couple on to our car. I turned to the hack again and opened the door and took Mary's hand. Her head was resting on her mother's breast, and

the eyes of both were filled with tears. I drew Mary gently towards me; "You must say good-by now," I said.

"Graham, I cannot," she sobbed, and she clasped her arms around her mother's neck and drew her more closely to her.

The cars came together with a slight jar; there was not a moment to spare. Mrs. Andrews gently loosened Mary's arms and gave her to me. "Be good to her, Graham," she said. Then she kissed Mary once more and I lifted her out of the hack.

We had scarcely mounted the platform before the train was in motion. I led Mary inside. Our drawing-room was at the same end of the car so we did not have to pass by the other passengers to enter it. As I opened the door I noticed through the window in the passage-way that the train had stopped again in front of the station. There was a large crowd present, and in the midst of it was Ewing. Whether he had heard of my marriage and had come down to make trouble or not I could not guess, though it made me more anxious than ever to get away. But he failed to see me, as the glass of the window was down and it was dark inside. At last the train started again and he slowly passed from my sight. I entered the room now and closed the door shutting out the view of the station—Mary had already gone inside. Our wedding journey had begun. Faster and faster moved the train. Through the window on our side of the car we could see the houses rushing

by us. Soon the last of these was passed and we were in the open country. Mary rested her head on my shoulder and let her tears flow without restraint.

Some minutes passed, and then, gradually, Mary's tears ceased, though I could still feel the rapid beating of her heart against my breast. Presently she felt for her handkerchief and I handed her mine. She dried her eyes and then looked up with a shadowy smile hovering on her lips, "I am never going to cry again," she said, "has it made me very ugly?"

It had not, strangely enough, though when I held her a little from me I noticed that her hat had got rather rakishly twisted to one side. As soon as I told her this she left me and ran to the glass, and, after one glance at her image began taking it off rapidly.

Meanwhile I looked around the room to see if all our luggage was safely in. Mine was; but that was all—not a sign of Mary's was visible. A sudden compunction seized me—for the past few years my life had been such a thoroughly selfish one that I had long since ceased to take a thought for another than myself—and now Mary's baggage had never been put on the train. I gazed around in despair. Just then Mary turned from the looking-glass with her hat in her hand and smiled at me. When she saw my semi-tragic expression she laughed. "What in the world is the matter?" she asked.

"Mary," I answered, "*who* did you have to attend to your baggage?"

At first she looked at me with surprise, then a deep blush rose to her cheek. "Oh, Graham, I forgot," she cried, "I intended to buy everything I needed—I thought of it while you were away; but when you joined me again everything passed from my mind. What, oh, what shall I do?"

I laughed and kissed her. "It really doesn't make any difference," I said, "we will be in New Orleans in the morning and then you can shop to your heart's content. Everything then will be free from the taint of Galveston."

I drew her to the seat by the window and raised the glass. We were on the long bridge, now, that connects the island with the main land, and a pleasant breeze was blowing over the bay.

Mary seemed hardly comforted by my suggestion. "It is simply awful," she said. "To think that I am on my wedding journey without a trousseau!—and I always intended to have such a beautiful one—Graham, you had better give me up."

I put my arm around her waist and pressed her to me before I answered. "I will not say yes even in jest. I would rather have you just as you are than another girl with a million trousseaux. You do not know yet all that you mean to me. It is so wonderful that I cannot realize it myself. And to think that at this hour yesterday I had given up all hope. Do you know what I did? I went to the graveyard where we spent our first hour

together and passed the afternoon sitting on the tombstone of our poor friend George. I needed gloomy surroundings to harmonize with my feelings. Even now I cannot realize that you are actually with me. If, at this moment, I should suddenly awake and find myself still sitting there I would hardly be surprised. Suppose, after all, that this is only a dream."

She put her arms around my neck and kissed me of her own free will. "It is not a dream," she said.

Oh, the delights of that journey. I cannot remember all our words—there were so many questions to ask and answer. She explained to me the reason of her action at Miss Morgan's, when, after inviting me there, she had filled her program without saving me a dance. It had not been really filled for two of the names on it were of men who did not exist. She was afraid that she had gone too far that morning and wished to frighten me a little. She did not want me to know yet how much she had really begun to care for me. But she had not intended to keep me frightened long, and a few minutes later, not seeing me in the room, had sent Howland to look for me. When he came back and told her that I had gone she was in despair. She had not thought for an instant that I would take it so seriously. The whole dance was spoilt for her then, and she had gone home before supper. And the next morning she had ridden out early to meet me and had spent nearly two hours on the beach.

When she got home she decided to write to me, but postponed doing so until the evening in hopes that I would write to her first. It was during the day, while calling on Miss Wallace, that she had heard the dance for Friday night discussed, and it was then that she had made up her mind to say nothing to me until she met me there. She had had nothing to do with the arrangement to change escorts—all she had done was to get Howland to promise faithfully to make me go to the dance. She did not even know that we were to meet in the carriage until that very night. And over what followed she had had absolutely no control. She would never have given me all her dances if, from the moment she had taken my arm in the garden, all her will had not deserted her.

It was a delightful journey—the only drawback was the porter. With that peculiar instinct which all good porters have he had sized us up as being out of the ordinary, and we had scarcely finished crossing the bridge before he gave a gentle knock at the door. We started apart as if we were engaged in doing something wrong, and then I called “come in.”

He entered, and after fumbling round among the towels, asked us if we would not like to have the sky-lights opened, and whether he should not put a screen in the window, and made many other desperate efforts to draw us into conversation. I finally took pity on him, and asked him at what time we would arrive at Houston, and how long

we would stop there. He answered, and then inquired whether we would take supper in Houston or on the train. I thought that the latter would be more pleasant for us, and so informed him; but it was a fatal mistake, for he made it the pretext of several other visits. He was overwhelmingly polite, though I think that we puzzled him somewhat, for while his instinct told him that we were a newly married couple, he could discover none of the customary signs either in our dress or luggage. After a time this rather embarrassed Mary, and on his leaving us after his third visit she whispered to me. "I am sure he is wondering where my baggage is; do invent some story to explain; you know that you are good at fiction," but I declined to lower my dignity by temporizing with a porter.

The question of luggage reminded me, however, to get out my traveling cap, and the few other things that I would need on the road. I pulled my valise from under the seat and opened it. Mary came and leaned over my shoulder. She was intensely interested—or pretended to be. Everything had to come out and be examined. The lid was beautifully arranged. It contained in little cases every conceivable toilet article. One thing that fascinated Mary was a little curling-iron for a man dudishly inclined to use in curling his mustache and a little spirit lamp with which to heat it. She siezed upon the curling-iron instantly, and was inclined to be somewhat ironical, though I assured her that I never used it, and pointed out the fact

that my mustache did not have little ringlets at its ends. She refused to accept my statement.

Then my silver-mounted hair brushes caught her eye, and she took them out and ran to the glass and began brushing her hair. I found my traveling cap finally, though it was not in the place where I generally kept it, and threw it on the seat. To my surprise a package, which I did not remember to have placed in my valise fell from it. I picked it up and was about to open it, when I saw the name, "Mrs. Graham Woodhouse," written on the outside.

"Mary," I cried, "come here; there is a present for you." She ran to my side, and together we opened the package. Inside was a case, and in this a beautiful little ladies' watch, and a jewel arrangement with which to attach it to the dress. Together with these was Miss Wallace's card on which, written in pencil, were a few words wishing her a pleasant journey.

Mary gave a little cry of pleasure. "What a dear girl she is," she said. "I told her this morning that I had left everything behind, and she must have noticed that I was without my watch; you must send her a telegram."

I agreed, and then, while Mary was still admiring her watch, turned again to my valise to replace the articles which had been taken out. My discovery of the watch had probably sharpened my senses, for now I noticed the edge of an envelope sticking out from behind my shaving-glass. I drew it out and opened it. There was some money inside

and a note from Howland. After a few words of ironical advice to the effect that a woman, a dog, and a hickory tree, the more you beat 'em the better they be, he continued: "I have decided that I cannot accept such a valuable horse as Queen from you as a present. Matrimony is an expensive luxury. The enclosed may come in handy on the road." There were five fifty-dollar bills.

"Mary," I called, "stop looking at your watch a minute; I have a wedding present, too. Look," and I showed her the bills, "this makes me fairly rolling in money."

She fastened the watch to her dress, and then, with absolute unconsciousness, as if she were so sure that all that was mine was hers now that it no longer needed a thought, took Howland's letter from my hand and began to read it. I watched her in silence, while the dread that she would never really become mine which had haunted me all day grew stronger. It could not be that after the life I had led I could win such a woman for my wife.

I do not think that I have ever tried to describe her—indeed, to describe her face would be beyond my power, for it was one of those in which the expression is everything. When interested in talking or when lit up by the excitement of a dance its beauty was almost dazzling, though these were the times that I cared for her the least, for I always felt that she was acting. It was her thoughtful face that I loved the best, or her face when absolutely in repose.

In figure she was above the average height, some five feet six or seven inches, I should think, and this caused her to appear more slender than she really was, for, if you looked at her closely, you could see that she had none of those hollows which exist in the bodies of women who are really thin. Her neck and arms were perfect, while, when she breathed deeply, or some excitement stirred her, you could see the outlines of her full breasts marked plainly by the movement of her dress.

Her waist was naturally small, though larger than those of women who compress themselves with corsets. The color of her hair was of the lightest chestnut, showing golden in the sunshine.

But it was in her eyes, I think, that her chief beauty lay, and when once you had learned to read them they told you her thoughts far more plainly than words.

Now, as they rapidly glanced over the first few lines of Howland's letter, I could see that they were laughing, though the rest of her face was grave. But presently they ceased to laugh, and when she laid the letter down they had become very thoughtful. She did not say anything, though, but took a seat next to my valise and watched me silently while I resumed my packing. A minute or two passed before she spoke.

"There is one thing that I have often wanted to ask you," she said finally. "You once told me that you had never had in your life, at one time, five hundred dollars, until you came to Galveston.

Now your family were always considered well off in the old days—much better off than we were then—tell me, did your father disinherit you?”

“No,” I answered, “he died suddenly without making a will.”

“Then you must have inherited equally with Alice.”

“I did, of course, but when the estate was settled there was not so much left as we had expected, and as Alice’s half alone was not enough to support her I gave her mine.”

“Oh, Graham, if I had only known this before! How I could have answered those who have accused you of being a fortune hunter. Only this morning my father was certain that if he offered you a thousand dollars that you would accept—and—you will forgive me, Graham—I was frightened that his judgment of you might be true. I knew since last night that I loved you—and yet—yet—I had an awful fear that I might have made a mistake in your character. You see I have been out so long, and many men have proposed to me—some of whom I really hardly knew, and who only asked me for the money which they thought that I would have—that it had become hard for me to trust anybody absolutely. And yet you see that I did trust you—haven’t I?”

It was twilight when we reached Houston. We left the car and walked up and down the platform for a few minutes. Then Mary reminded me of the telegram for Miss Wallace, and I left her for a moment to send it. When I returned I found

her talking to a young Galvestonian named Clegget, a most inveterate chatterbox and a good deal of a bore. We were not friends and he had been a decided partisan of Ewing's during my poker trouble.

I greeted him now rather shortly. He took no notice of this, however, as he could not be put down by any ordinary snub. I was about to make my meaning a little more plain when he said: "I suppose, Miss Andrews, you are waiting for some friends."

Mary was about to answer when an idea occurred to me which would give me a chance to obtain a little revenge. I raised my eyebrows slightly as a signal and she caught my meaning instantly. For the next few minutes she became Miss Andrews again, and flirted with the creature, whom she disliked as much as I did, outrageously, and froze me every time I uttered a word. This encouraged him so much that he began trying to get rid of me. He would propose a walk to the end of the platform, and Mary would start off with him; then I would calmly take my place on her other side and walk with them. After two or three turns this so exasperated him that he finally stopped abruptly and said, "Pardon me—er—Mr. Woodhouse, but I have a message to deliver to Miss Andrews alone," and he smiled at her privately as if he had said a very clever thing.

"Oh, you needn't bother about my being present," I answered, "Mrs. Woodhouse won't mind."

The blow staggered him for an instant, and before he could recover I followed it up with another; "But I am afraid that you will have to postpone your message until some other time as my wife and I are now about to take the train;" then I bowed and Mary smiled sweetly and took my arm and we left him, struck dumb for the first time in his life. A moment later I was sorry for my victory, though my feelings were running so deeply now that any superficial idiocy was a relief. For I knew that the crisis of my life was drawing nearer and nearer and I more than dreaded the result.

The lights were burning when we returned to our car, and shortly after we started the porter served us our dinner. He had flowers on the table, and strawberries and fresh fruit, having evidently finally decided that he was right in his conjectures, even if there were no outside indications that we were a newly married couple.

It was nearly nine when we finished. We left the drawing-room to give the porter an opportunity to prepare the berths for the night and walked out to the rear platform of our car, which was the last on the train, and sat down on the steps. It was a beautiful night, and we had a clear view of the scenery around us. The moon was nearly full, and there was not a cloud in the sky. We were passing through a thickly wooded stretch of country, and the shadows of the great trees met and interlaced across the track.

For many minutes we sat in silence. Mary rested her head on my shoulder and watched the flying shadows with dreamy eyes. The peace of the moment was so perfect that I dreaded to break it with words; but broken it had to be, for I felt that I must tell Mary before we retired that night how it was that the accident on the beach had occurred. I wished our married life to begin without a secret between us, and now the time to speak had come. As yet I did not consider ourselves as being really married, for the legal ceremony we had gone through that day I counted as nothing. A marriage is not a marriage until it is consummated, and the consummation can only be sanctified by love—those who enter into it for wealth, position or any other reason are merely legalized prostitutes.

But it was fearfully hard for me to begin, and many more minutes slipped by before I could force myself to speak. At last I found my voice: "There is something that I must tell you, dearest," I said, "it is the only secret that I have from you; but I hardly know how to begin."

I paused, and Mary moved slightly; but it was only to nestle more closely to me, and to turn her head so that she could watch my face. "Don't tell me if you don't want to," she said; "is it a bad secret?"

"I hardly know," I answered, "but I am afraid that it is—at least, most people would think so; but I don't care for that as long as you don't think with them. I really don't want to tell you; but

you have given me a conscience, and it says that I must."

I stopped again and looked at Mary. We had entered into a wide clearing now, and the moonlight was striking full upon her face. I could see by it that she had grown more serious; but still she did not speak, so I continued: "I will put it in the form of a story; it will be easier for me that way."

"Once upon a time there lived a man. He was not such a very bad man, as men go, though he was far from being a good one. He knew this himself, and he often made resolutions to reform, though he never carried them out. Then came a day when he saw for an instant a woman's soul. It was so bright that it dazzled him at first; dazzled him so that for a time he went on more blindly than before; but one night the light from it pierced him. From then he strove with all his force to make himself more worthy. Months passed; again the body of the woman was before him. But when he looked for the soul which had sustained him, it was no longer there, or was hidden from his sight beneath a mass of worldliness. He strove to find it again, but it seemed to be too late. Then he lost hope and became reckless. He plunged into every kind of dissipation—but still he could not forget the beauty of the soul that he had once seen. He went away, but its power over him remained unbroken, and once again drew him towards the spot where the body it inhabited dwelt. And there came one night on his journey

onward, while he was resting in the open air looking at the stars, that he made a resolution—that while life remained, and cost what it might, he would never cease striving to win the woman for his wife, and that never again in thought or deed would he do an act that would render him unworthy of her.” Mary’s arm passed round my waist, and her cheek pressed more closely on my shoulder. I kissed her once—only once—though I knew that it might be for the last time—then continued:

“So he came again to the place where the body of the woman lived. And on the very first day of his arrival he saw her—saw her at a moment when his own life was trembling in the balance.”

Mary raised her head for an instant: “Graham, my heart stopped beating in that moment.”

“He saw her the next day—she was riding—and he saw her day after day; but she no longer knew him.”

“Darling, I was longing in my heart all the time to speak, but my pride prevented me.”

“—She no longer knew him. Then he grew desperate, and said, ‘I *will* make her speak to me and know me again’; and when a desperate man says, ‘I will,’ only death can stop him.

“He thought for many days before a plan came to him. It was a plan such as only one who is desperate could make. Even he hesitated before carrying it out, for it involved her life as well as his own. While hesitating he wrote her a letter. She returned the letter——”

"Graham, darling, I did not dare to open it. Oh, if I had known that you loved me like this——"

"She returned the letter with a few words of her own, and something in these appealed to him and he abandoned his plan. But the next day she did not ride and his hesitation vanished. That night, like a thief, he entered her stable, and, taking the bridle of her horse, removed two links of the chain—one on each side—tying——"

The heart against my breast began to beat rapidly, and the pressure of the arm around my waist increased, but she said nothing.

"Tying the parts together again with thread of the same color strongly enough to resist any ordinary strain, but sure to break if a sudden jerk were given. He returned to his home, and all the next day he sat at the window of his room watching for the woman to come out. He was to ride behind her, and as soon as her bridle broke and her horse ran away he was to rescue her. Then she would know him again and speak to him, and in her gratitude she would grant his request to be allowed to see her alone for one hour every day."

I could feel that Mary was trembling, but the story had to be finished so I continued resolutely: "He realized fully the risk that he was taking; but he knew that the woman was a good rider, and he felt certain that he could stop her horse before she was thrown. But for the failure of his plan he was also prepared. With him he carried a pistol: if she should fall and not be killed instantly, but

injured so severely as to become a helpless cripple, he would see that she did not live to suffer; one bullet would save her from all pain, and then another would meet out to him his punishment."

Mary straightened up suddenly. "Stop," she cried. "Don't tell me any more. This is horrible."

But it was too late to stop now, so I hurried through with the last few words of my story, while Mary sat tense with her hands clasped in front of her and the fingers interlocked. "The man, I say, was desperate. Life without her had become impossible to him. His love had become a passion that swept all else before it. Now it is different. He could not do to-day what he ventured to do then. She has taught him what love really is. Yet even at that time his love was not altogether selfish. If the man she was about to marry had been one who could have made her happy he might have hesitated. But there was no chance of this. She could never have learned to love the man to whom she was promised. Their mating would have meant the prostitution of her body and the death of her soul.

"And what is death after all—nothing. Is it not better to leave the world of your own free will when you know that life has nothing more to offer you, than to drag out long years of unhappiness, waiting restlessly for the day when sickness or accident should send you to the grave?

"So this man believed, and so he acted. His plan involved no suffering. Death would be instantane-

ous. And if by any possibility there should be a hereafter in which punishment is meted out to those who have sinned on earth, he alone would be the one adjudged guilty.

"This is all the story, Mary, can you forgive the man?"

She let her hands fall despairingly in her lap, and buried her face in them. When she raised it again all the light had gone out of her eyes, and she looked drawn and haggard. "Graham, you have broken my heart, I think," she said, "the most beautiful dream of my life is gone. To-day I gave you all my love, and to-night you let me know that it has been based on a falsehood. How could you, oh, how could you?—that you risked my life I hardly care—it was worthless, I suppose—but to win my heart from me by acting a lie for three long weeks—I cannot—no, I never can forgive you."

XI.

Even now I cannot tell the story of the dreary hours that followed. A deadly numbness had come over me with Mary's last words, and I no longer felt the strength to continue the hopeless struggle.

The next morning we were in New Orleans, and from there I telegraphed to her mother to join us. In a few hours I received an answer saying that she would come. I sent the message to Mary's room. She acknowledged it in writing, but did not ask to see me; nor did we meet during the entire day.

I was at the station the next morning to receive Mrs. Andrews. She was looking very ill. On our way to the hotel she tried to question me, but I asked her to wait until she had seen Mary. Later in the day she sent for me, and we had a long talk. Mary had told her everything. It was agreed that we should separate, and later, when Mary applied for a divorce, that I should not oppose it.

I went to the office and paid my bill and Mary's—for this I still had a right to do—then to my room where I hurriedly packed my valise. The end that I had expected had come. Deep in my heart I had known all along that Mary would never really be my wife. The promise that I had made on the evening that her horse ran away if she would give me twenty-four hours I would keep—and I

had known even then that there was but one way in which it could be done; for she had become too integral a part of my life for me to live after she had gone out of it. My plan had been to tell her the story of the broken bridle on the last day before asking her to be my wife, and then, if she should refuse in such a manner as to convince me that there was no hope, to leave Galveston, and, when far enough away, to lose my life in some seeming accident. I would take such means as I could to prevent my body from ever being identified to spare her, in case she should ever think of me again, from feeling that she had been the cause of my death. Now I could not do this as our marriage had changed everything. She would have to know of my death. I must still make it accidental, as otherwise, in trying to atone for one wrong, I would only do her a greater, for to have the story told that her husband had committed suicide immediately after her marriage, would cast a stain on her character from which, despite her innocence, she would never recover. When or how I would do this I had not yet thought, but opportunities are never lacking to the man who is ready to make them.

Calling a porter I gave him my valise and steamer-trunk to put into a hack, and, a few minutes later, started after him along the corridor. I had only gone a few steps when I met Mrs. Andrews.

"I was just going to your room," she said. "Mary—Mary wishes to see you."

I joined her, and we walked together down the

corridor, but without speaking. In the parlor connected with Mary's room she left me. It was empty, and, after a moment, I walked to the window and looked down on the busy street below; but with unseeing eyes. Presently I heard the faint rustle of a skirt, and turned and saw Mary. She stopped near the table in the center of the room, and I walked toward her. "You wished to see me?" I said, though my throat almost choked with the words.

"Yes," she answered, breathlessly. "You—my divorce—mother tells me that she saw them taking away your trunk—you are going away."

"Yes."

"Where?"

"I do not know yet—out of the country, probably."

"Graham, you are not—that is why I have sent for you—I have not slept since we parted—thinking of it—you are going to kill yourself."

I felt the blood leave my heart suddenly, and for a moment I could not answer.

She stepped forward and grasped my arm. "I knew it," she cried. "Oh, God, what can I do," she dropped my arm, and sank into a chair next to the table, and buried her face in her hands.

So we remained for nearly a minute. I could not deny her words, for they were true, and I had sworn to myself never to lie to her again.

I was still hesitating what to say, when the door of Mary's bedroom opened, and Mrs. Andrews appeared. She stopped abruptly on the threshold.

when she saw us. "Oh," she said, "I thought you had gone;" then she stepped back and closed the door.

Mary had started up at the sound of her mother's voice, and when we were alone again, once more laid her hand on my arm; she had recovered her self-control, now. "Graham," she said, "promise me on your honor not to do this. You are still my husband, and I have a right to ask you—or no, I do not ask it as a right, but as a favor—as a favor in memory of the love I had for you."

Her hand pressed more heavily on my arm.

What could I do? She asked the greatest sacrifice I could make—and yet I hardly hesitated.

"I promise," I said.

She took my hand in hers and pressed it—oh, if I had only had my courage then—but I did not, and the next moment I was alone.

Two days later I was in New York. There was but one resource open to me now—work, and I plunged into it desperately. In a month the novel I had been working on so long was finished. I knew too much of publishers to waste time sending it around, but took it to one of the best houses, and told them that I would pay all expenses, they to take the customary author's ten per cent and I all the rest. They accepted this; but the next day I got the MS back from them with a short note, saying that the novel was too immoral for their house to handle. And this experience I had repeated with the second house I tried. This

convinced me so thoroughly that my book was good that I tried no more publishers but organized myself into a company and went direct to a printing house that would take anything, provided they were paid for it. They charged me three hundred dollars for the plates, and the first thousand copies—the binding was in paper to retail at fifty cents. The distribution was more difficult, but I finally got a news company to take them off my hands, payment to be made only for those copies sold.

From the time I had finished reading the proofs I had begun to hate my book, and when this work was done I turned everything over to a responsible agent and, leaving him no address, hid myself in a farm house in the Adirondacks where I was the only boarder. It was a very quiet spot, and though there was a summer hotel on one of the lakes only five miles distant I never saw a human being, except at a distance, outside of the old farmer and his wife, with whom I was boarding. From daylight until dark I was in the open air climbing the different hills, excepting on the very rainy days when it was impossible to walk. On these I would work on a new book I had commenced to keep myself from thinking of Mary.

This, as the days wore on, became my hardest task. All my energy had returned to me now, and I did not dare to loosen for an instant the curb I had put on myself. I knew without thinking that if I did no promise that I had made would keep me for an instant from rushing to her side.

So, nearly two months passed, and it was the first of September. It was a clear, cold day, with a touch of frost in the air. When I left the house after breakfast in the morning I took, without thinking, a road which I had always avoided before—the road to the village. As I walked a great restlessness came over me—my blood danced in my veins—my strength seemed limitless—I felt that I could grasp the stoutest tree beside me and tear it from the soil as easily as I could the smallest sapling.

After an hour's walk a bend in road allowed me a glimpse of the roof of the summer hotel, and of the lake below. A sudden desire to hear of the outside world came over me—overmastered me. I turned sharply, pressed through the bushes on the side of the road, and began climbing down the precipitous side of the mountain. Somehow I reached the bottom safely, and found myself at the back of the hotel. I walked around to the front, and mounted the steps of the veranda. It was absolutely deserted, and the front door was closed. Evidently, the cold and rain of the past two weeks had caused the season to end abruptly, for my farmer had told me that the hotel kept open until some time in October.

I started home again by a longer road, and reached the farm in time for dinner, but the long walk failed to calm my restlessness. My curb was broken, and I could not patch it together again. For two days I struggled along, doing an immense amount

of walking; on the third I packed my few belongings and started for the nearest railroad station. On the morning of the 5th I was in New York.

I went again to the small hotel where I had stopped on my return from New Orleans, and where I had left my trunk, and registered. As soon as the clerk saw my name he became visibly interested, and apologized for not having recognized me immediately on account of the beard which I had grown while away. He told me that there had been a gentleman inquiring for me every day for the past two weeks, and handed me several cards. They all bore the name of the agent in whose hands I had placed my novel.

It excited me somewhat, for it said plainly that something important had happened; but it was still too early to call at his office, so I went to my room—the clerk had given me a much better one than he had before—took a bath, shaved off my beard, and opened my trunk to look among the few clothes I had left behind for something to wear; for the suit I had traveled in was about worn out. The best I could find was the one I had bought in New Orleans, and had used on my ride to Galveston.

I had had it cleaned and pressed before I left there, and it had not been worn since. I was gambler enough to believe in luck, and it had always been a lucky suit to me. I put it on with a feeling of confidence, and then went to breakfast.

At ten o'clock I was at the door of my agent's

office. It was closed, and, for a moment, I did not have courage to knock; then I braced myself and rapped gently with my knuckles. There was no reply, and I waited for nearly a minute before I struck the door again. This time my blow was stronger, and a voice called, "Come in." I entered.

Two hours later I was again in my room at the hotel. I had to be alone with my thoughts. A success greater than I had even imagined had come to me. My book had provoked a storm of criticism and was selling faster than it could be printed. Never again could I be reproached with being a nameless adventurer.

And the letters. Before me on the table was a mass which I could not begin to read. I turned them over idly, still too dazed to think.

Then out of the pile one stood forth bearing the postmark of Galveston. I did not know the hand, but opened it eagerly. It was from Mrs. Andrews. There were only a few words, and I read them at a glance. They were again in Galveston, and Mary was sick. She spoke of having written me two letters. She asked me now to telegraph my address as soon as I received this letter. I looked at the date and saw that it had been written two weeks before. I ran through my pile of letters now rapidly looking for others in the same handwriting, but there were no more. I found one from Howland, however, which I put in my pocket without opening. For a moment I sat thinking,

then I got up and rang the call, and then began hurriedly repacking my trunk; once more I would visit Galveston.

Before my bell was answered I had changed my mind about my trunk, as it would only hamper my movements, and had thrown the few things I would need in my valise. Then I walked down the stairs to the office. As I paid my bill I thought for the first time about money. I had only a few dollars in change left in my pocket, but fortunately I still had some in the bank, and also, now I thought of it, plenty of time, for the through train did not leave until 4:25. I went to the bank and drew out all my money, taking part of it in New York exchange, then, by an effort of will, forced myself to sit through a long course dinner. This killed the time until three o'clock, and I then had an engagement with the agent of my novel; but I could not bring myself to face this. I sent him a telegram saying that I was called away suddenly, and took a cab to the ferry for Jersey City. I was still too early for the train, and in the waiting-room on the New York side, and later in Jersey City, spent a miserable hour. I knew that all this was senseless, but some voice seemed whispering to me constantly, "Hurry, hurry, hurry."

At last I was started, and then came the weary ride on the train—two nights and a day. It was not until Friday morning that we arrived at New Orleans. Here I had to change cars, but when I reached the other depot I found that we had been

late for our connection, and that the train for Houston had already gone. There was nothing to do except wait for the evening train. For a moment, in my eagerness to get forward, I thought of hiring a special, but when I enquired the price I found that it would take more money than I had with me in cash—for, as I have said, a part of it was in New York exchange, and there was no one in New Orleans who could identify me—and then my reason told me that there was no need for any such haste, for the train I had missed would arrive late at night, and, even if I caught it, I would have to wait until the next morning before I could see Mary.

I left the depot, and spent the day walking, and riding about town in the street cars; but I was back again early, and evening found me started on my way to Houston.

The weather was very bad, and, as the night advanced, I noticed that we were losing time. I sat up until everybody else had gone to bed, then, worn out, turned in myself. Though I awoke early, I remained in my berth until the porter called me to breakfast, as we were not due in Galveston until noon, and I wished a good rest for what was before me. I knew that I was nearing the crisis at last, and that my first meeting with Mary would settle everything.

During the morning I bought a Galveston paper and read it carefully, but there was no mention of any of the Andrews family in it. I noticed, however, that it stated that there was a storm in the Gulf,

which accounted for the bad weather we were having.

Just before we reached Houston, as I was gazing out of the window at the rain-soaked country around, Howland's letter suddenly occurred to me. I felt for it in the breast pocket of my coat, where I remembered having placed it before leaving New York, but found that it was gone. I regretted, for a moment, having lost it, then we arrived in Houston and the incident passed from my mind. We were now several hours behind time, and could hardly reach Galveston before five.

There was some further delay in Houston before we started again, but I did not leave the car. The rain, I could see, was coming down heavily, and the bent bodies of the few people visible showed that there was a strong wind blowing.

After we had left the city behind, and had begun cutting down the last fifty miles which separated us from Galveston, I tried to decide how I should approach Mary. Her mother's letter had given no details that could be of any service to me. I took it out, however, and read it again, though it was hardly necessary, for I had been through it so many times already that I had her words almost by heart.

The bold course, I decided finally, would be the best. I would go direct from the train to her father's house and demand admittance. If it was refused I would enter anyhow. Nothing should keep me now from meeting Mary face to face. I

hoped that her father would not be there, but, even if he was, I would enter in spite of him.

With the bad habit I have of anticipating events I was in the midst of an imaginary conversation with Mr. Andrews when I noticed that our train had stopped. I waited for a few minutes, but as we did not start again I left my seat to find out what was the matter.

When I reached the platform of the car, and started forward to the next, I was almost lifted from my feet by the wind. Only by grasping the railing firmly could I reach the next car. Here I met the conductor and learned the cause of the stoppage. There was a freight train ahead of us and we could not pass it—as there was no side-track—before Virginia Point was reached—the last station on the mainland, beyond which the bridge across the bay to Galveston began.

As soon as I learned that there was to be a fresh delay all my restlessness returned. I waited impatiently where I was for a few minutes, then, as the conductor, who had left me after answering my questions, did not come back, nor the train start, I decided to walk forward to the freight train. If they would let me I would ride to the bridge on it, and then take the passenger again when it stopped at Virginia Point before crossing the bridge. It would at least be doing something.

When I stood on the platform of the car again, however, and felt the wind and rain, and saw how

muddy the road looked, I hesitated. But anything was better than keeping still, and the next moment I stepped down and started forward.

As soon as I passed the head of the train, and the full force of the wind caught me, I regretted that I had not remained in the comfortable Pullman. I had never felt such a storm before, and the rain soaked my clothes through in an instant—but there was no use now in turning back, so I continued on until I reached the caboose of the freight train.

I found the conductor and brakeman inside, and the former told me the cause of the delay. Something about the engine had got out of order, but the engineer was fixing it, and they were liable to start at any moment. I then asked if I could go on with them.

It was against orders, the conductor said; but just then we began to move, and he allowed me to remain on.

He told me, now, that he doubted being able to cross the bridge, as at the last station there was a report that the water of the bay was rising fast, but that he would at least go on to Virginia Point.

It may have been fifteen or twenty minutes later when there was a sudden jar, and the train came to a stop. The conductor and brakemen jumped from the bunk where they had been sitting and ran out. I followed them. When I reached the ground I understood instantly why the engineer

had stopped without orders. Ahead, as far as the eye could reach, the flats were covered with water, and a deep wave was advancing steadily towards us.

As I stood undecided I saw the conductor spring to the nearest car and begin climbing rapidly up the iron ladder attached to its side, while the brakeman started forward under shelter of the cars waving his arms to signal the engineer to back.

Suddenly, just as the conductor's arm was rising above the top of the car, I saw the caboose leaning toward me. Instinctively, I sprung backwards. The next instant the rear of the caboose crashed down on the spot where I had been standing, while the whole line of freight cars in front toppled over like a row of cards. Then the full force of the hurricane struck me, and I was lifted from my feet and dashed to the ground.

For a moment I lay half stunned; but soon the beating of the rain revived me, and I struggled to my feet. But I could not face the wind, and had to crouch down again and crawl on hands and knees until I reached the protection of the caboose which had been blown clear off the track and was lying on its side. Then I stood up and looked around. Nothing living was in sight. Keeping close to the wrecked train I walked forward until I reached the car I had seen the conductor climbing. From underneath its edge, half buried in the mud, I saw his arm protruding, but the rest of his body was hidden beneath the wreckage. There was not a

sign of the brakeman. With some vague idea of assistance I seized the outstretched arm by the hand and pulled. There was a slight resistance, then the whole arm slipped out of the coat sleeve and swung loose in my hand. It had been completely severed from the body by the projecting top of the car. For an instant I felt sick. I dropped the arm by the empty coat sleeve and rested against the car for support. I had touched dead things before, but nothing so awful as that loose arm. The advancing wave now reached where I was standing, and the muddy water took on a darker color as it mixed with the blood which had begun to ooze from beneath the car. Then this faded into the mass, the arm disappeared, and the rapidly rising water hid all signs of the brief tragedy. On the moment I realized completely the full meaning of the scene around me, and my self-control returned. The waters of the bay and gulf had met, and the whole country would be flooded. It would be impossible to reach Galveston by rail while the storm lasted. My best plan would be to return to the passenger train and wait on it until the waters receded. I looked down the track, but it was not yet in sight, so I started back to meet it; but the instant I left the shelter of the caboose I was again beaten to the ground by the wind. Its force was tremendous. I crawled back again to the caboose. The door was open and I decided to shelter myself inside until the passenger drew near, when I would make another effort to reach it.

The body of the caboose had left the wheels and was lying on its side in the water with the bottom somewhat higher than the top. I got in without difficulty, and, crouching in the doorway, waited. Half an hour passed, but there was no sign of the other train. Gradually the truth came to me. The conductor of the passenger had realized the danger in time, and had turned back. I was alone on the wrecked train, unless the engineer and fireman were still alive on the engine—whether they escaped or not I never knew.

On this whole trip, while I had nothing real to fear, I had been in a constant state of nervous restlessness—now that there was something tangible to face my nervousness left me. I saw that I would have to spend some time in the caboose, as the water would hardly go down before the next day.

It was now growing dark, so, leaving the door. I hunted around until I found the conductor's lantern, and then, lighting it, hung it to a hook on the side, now the top of the caboose. I also found his lunch bucket and a canteen of water, and as I had eaten nothing since my late breakfast that morning, I sat down on one of the reversed bunks and ate the food I found in it.

I do not remember having felt, then, any fear for my safety—my only anxiety was about Mary, though even this was not very great, for I had lived through two storms in Galveston and knew, I thought, the worst they could do. Some of the

houses on the outskirts would be wrecked, and the low-lying parts of the town flooded; but the Andrews' home, on the high ground of Tremont street, would be perfectly safe—that Mary was not there, but was even at that moment facing advancing death, never for an instant occurred to me—for this was the beginning of the great storm of Galveston when eight thousand people lost their lives. Well it was for me that I had never read Howland's letter, for in it, as I learned the next Monday, when I was telling him and Miss Wallace good by before leaving the stricken city forever, he had written to me that Mary had never returned to her father's house, but was living at the Denver Resurvey in the Agnew cottage—a small cottage almost on the beach, and near the sand hills we had ridden to so often. And I would have known, then, the fearful danger she must be in at that moment, and my helplessness would have maddened me.

But even the wildest scene that my imagination could have pictured would not have equalled the reality. It was the next day, when I was on my way to the Denver Resurvey to search for her body, that I heard the story. I had passed a pile of wreckage, when I thought I heard someone call my name, and stopped. The call was repeated, and then I saw that it came from a woman almost at the top of the pile, and seemingly pinned down by a heavy piece of lumber. Though I grudged every moment that kept me from my search, I

could not leave her where she was; I turned back, and, climbing up the pile, worked until I got her free.

The moment I had reached her she had fainted, but while I was half carrying, half dragging her down she revived, and again spoke to me by name. Then, though with difficulty, for her face was much bruised, I recognized her. She was a milkwoman who lived near the Denver Resurvey, and Mary and I had stopped at her house several times on our rides to buy milk. When I remembered this I questioned her about Mary, and then, in broken sentences, for she was very weak, and her brain seemed dazed by the horror of the past night, I got the story:

It was the evening of the day before—about the hour when I was eating supper in the caboose—and she and her two children were crouching in the cupola of her house expecting every moment to be washed away. The water had already flooded the floor below and the waves of the gulf were raging around them. Many houses had already fallen, and she was watching one near the beach against which the surf was beating furiously. It was the one in which Mary lived. Wave after wave dashed against it; but still it stood. Then there came a slight lull in the storm, and she was beginning to hope, when a huge wave rose in the gulf and advanced slowly towards it.

“I seen it coming,” she said—and it almost seemed to me that I could see it also as I watched

her wild eyes—"and I screamed: 'Oh, Miss Mary, take care!' though the noise was so awful that I couldn't even hear my babies crying right next to me; then it reached the house. It did not strike it, but just sort of lifted it up and carried it with it. It brought it almost to our fence before it broke. Then the house stranded with its front turned round and facing our yard. Then I seen that Miss Mary was standing in the window of the attic which used to face the gulf. The glass was all broke in, and I could see her plain. She didn't seem at all frightened, and I think she called something to me, though I couldn't hear what she said. I hadn't seen her for a long time, as she'd been sick. I watched her for nearly a minute, then I seen another wave coming and closed my eyes. I couldn't bear to stand there helpless and watch her drown. I heard an awful crash when the wave broke on the roof, and when I looked again the house was gone. I never seen her again. And then the next wave struck my own house and my two babies was washed away. I don't remember nothing after that until I woke this morning and found myself here;" then she sank to the ground, crying, "Oh, my babies, my babies, I wish to God I'd drowned with you,"—and there I left her.

But all this was unknown to me, then, and for the moment I had nothing to face but the long night before me.

For the last few months I had always carried

with me a pocket chessboard, and after supper I took this out and began working on some chess problems. It needed a strong effort of will to do this, but I had myself well in hand, now, and was determined not to worry.

I may have passed an hour in this way when, on looking up from my problem, I noticed that the bottom of the car was rapidly filling with water, and that a thin stream was entering through the door. I got on top of the bunk to be out of its way, and stretched myself at full length.

But I could not fix my attention on the chess problem again and so, for a few minutes, lay watching the water. It rose so rapidly that it soon reached the seat—and then I began to realize the seriousness of my position. It would be dangerous to remain inside any longer.

I had just stepped to the floor, where the water was already above my knees, intending to take refuge on the platform, when the car gave a sudden lurch, and I was thrown down. Before I could regain my feet, it slipped from the high ground on which it had been resting, and a wall of water rushed in, carrying me with it to the other end. For a moment it looked as if I was to be drowned like a rat in a trap. Presently, however, the water receded a little, and I was able to regain my breath. The car was still on its side, though from the way it tossed about I knew that it must be afloat.

Once more I started for the door, and this time

gained it. Then, holding my breath, for the door was completely under water, I dropped to my knees and crawled through.

When I came to the surface outside I saw that the top of the caboose was almost on a level with the water. I swam to it, and, grasping the edge, drew myself up. Here I was exposed to the full fury of the storm, and it was all I could do to keep my position. I lay on my face, with my body flat, so as to offer as little resistance to the wind as possible, and grasped the edge of the car with my hands.

And now began a battle for my life. The storm was at its height, and the force of the wind was something indescribable. The rain cut like a knife. Again and again I was washed from the top of the car, and tossed about by the waves, but each time I was able to regain it. It was well that my muscles had been hardened by years of training, or I would never have been able to hold out as I did through the next few hours.

I had lost all count of the time, but, as I learned afterwards, somewhere about midnight the wind began to die down, and the rain grew less. The violent motion of the car ceased, though I could feel that a strong current was carrying it rapidly in some direction. Occasionally, through a rift in the clouds, the moonlight broke forth for an instant, but all it showed me was a mass of tossing waves. Whether I had been carried out to sea, or was still on the flats, I could not tell. Once

I thought surely that I was at sea for I passed in the distance an ocean steamer. But I was not at sea, but was still on the flats, for the next day the steamer was found beached a mile inland.

As the motion grew less, and I no longer had to struggle each instant to retain my hold, I must have slept for a while from exhaustion—though it still seems to me that I was awake the whole night—for when I next begin to remember clearly it was daylight, and the caboose was stranded on the very edge of the bay. The water had gone down.

For a moment I could not realize my position, for I seemed to be in the midst of a ruined city. All around me was a mass of wreckage piled in the most fantastic shapes: on top of the roof of a wrecked house a fishing-sloop was resting: a street car and a cistern were welded into each other; then came more wrecks of houses and vessels, while scattered over all were chairs, tables, bedding—all the furnishings of many houses—and thousands and thousands of pieces of lumber. Some eddy of the water had brought them all together.

I stepped to the side of the car and looked down. Then I saw that mixed in with the wreckage were many bodies, some so beaten about by the waves as to seem no longer human.

Within a few feet of me, tied to a door, was the body of a child, but the head had been crushed in; while near it lay a young woman whom I recognized as having often seen on the streets of Galveston. Her dress had been stripped completely from her

body, and, naked, she lay on her back with sightless eyes staring at the sky.

On the other side of the car it was the same; men and women and children, many of them naked, and some twisted into the most horrible shapes, were strewn amidst the wreckage.

I turned from them and looked across the bay toward Galveston. A great fear had come over me. If all these bodies were from there some dreadful calamity had happened to it. The distance was too far for me to distinguish anything very clearly, though I could see that the Tremont Hotel was still standing.

In the first few moments after I awoke, in looking at the dead around me, I had almost forgotten the object of my journey; but now it came back to me with a rush. I jumped down from the top of the car and walked to the edge of the water. By some means I must reach Galveston immediately.

The bridge was gone, but among the wreckage were many boats, and these I began to examine. I found, presently, a little skiff which seemed less damaged than the others. Though well up on shore, it was still filled with water, which showed that it was sea-worthy. I emptied the water out, and dragged it to the edge of the bay, then searched the nearest pile of wreckage until I found a piece of board that would serve for a paddle as the oarlocks were gone, and the upper part too broken for rowing.

The sun was well up when I finally got the skiff

into deep water and began my journey. The day promised to be warm. After I passed the ruins of the bridge I steered eastward so as to land on the bay side of the city, as I judged that walking would be almost impossible at the point where the bridge had joined the island. The tide was going out, which made my work easier, though my progress was still very slow.

As I advanced the sights around me became more horrible. It was death, death everywhere.

Once, a dead body, already swollen by the gasses inside, shot up near me: the face had been eaten off by the fish. Again, I passed a raft with a man still living: he was singing—his sufferings the night before had driven him insane. And then more dead, and more dead, and always wreckage, wreckage, wreckage.

It was nearing noon when I reached the bay front, and then I began to realize fully the awful damage that the storm had wrought. The whole edge of the bay shore as far as I could see was destroyed. Where once there had been handsome buildings were now only great heaps of ruins. The wharves were gone.

At Thirtieth street I landed. The dead were everywhere, and the streets so blocked with wreckage that walking was almost impossible. Sometimes I advanced under the tottering walls of ruined houses, and sometimes over piles of wreckage from which, now and again, some mangled corpse would protrude.

As I neared Market street I began to meet living people, but their faces were almost more terrible than those of the dead, and deeper and deeper grew my fear for Mary.

At Bath avenue, which, less settled, was more free from fallen houses, I turned toward the south. Its surface, like those of the other streets I had crossed, was covered with a thick slime, and more than once I fell: but, at last, in spite of all obstacles, I reached Broadway.

The houses here had suffered less, though the roofs of many were gone, while nearly every window-pane had been blown in.

I followed Broadway until I reached Tremont, and then, as I turned again toward the beach, saw that the Andrews house was still standing.

I covered the short distance that remained rapidly.

As I drew near I saw that the garden was littered with rubbish, but it evidently did not come from the house, but had been carried there by the waters. I forced my way through this, and then climbed on to the veranda, for the steps leading to it had been washed away. The front door was standing open.

Ringling the bell, I entered. No one was in sight and I continued to the drawing-room. The water had reached even here, and everything was in the wildest disarray. I waited a moment, but could hear no sound of any one coming, so passed through its length to the dining-room——and then I saw Mr. Andrews.

He was seated at the end of the long table, with his elbows resting on it, and his head bowed down between his hands. He raised his eyes at the sound of my entrance, and looked at me, but said nothing.

Then I saw that in the night he had become a decrepit old man, and in a flash I realized what the storm had meant to him. All his property was in Galveston and the surrounding country—in houses and real estate, and in shares of the various manufacturing establishments—the collateral of his bank was now worthless, and he was ruined.

A feeling of pity entered my heart, and when I spoke it was in a different tone than I thought I would ever use toward him: "Where is Mary?" I asked.

He did not seem to hear me, so I advanced to his side, and took him by the arm: "Where is Mary?" I repeated.

He half straightened up for an instant, and gazed at me dully out of his bleared eyes, then he answered slowly, "Dead."

Dead!—I could not—would not realize it. Nothing but her body lying before me could convince me—and even then I would not be convinced.

"Where is she?" I asked.

He did not reply, but, waving me away with a feeble gesture, let his head fall again to the table.

I saw that it would be useless to question him further now, so, without another word, left him and started to search the house.

I was never more cool in my life. For the moment

my feelings were absolutely dead. I went into each room down stairs, then mounted to the second story.

I entered first the room which I knew had been Mary's. The windows had been blown in by the wind, and everything was in confusion. One glance showed me that she was not there. I turned to the next room: and then from room to room until I had examined every one. Except for Mr. Andrews the house was absolutely deserted. I passed down the back stairway to the kitchen, and then, at last, found someone—it was only the negro cook—for everyone, even Mrs. Andrews, had left the house to join in the search for the dead—and for the first time learned where Mary had been living.

She was there alone, the woman told me, except for one servant, a negro girl, who, before her marriage, had been her maid, though Mrs. Andrews spent much of the time with her. She had not been able to visit her the day before on account of the storm, and that morning word had reached them that Mary was dead.

As soon as I learned where she had been living I left the house and again faced the wrecked city—directing my course toward the Denver Resurvey. It was then, as I have already written, that I rescued the woman, and heard the story of Mary's death.

But still I would not give in, and sullenly, through slime and wreckage, forced my way onward.

Since the night before I had had nothing to eat or drink; but I was scarcely conscious of fatigue. All my powers were now concentrated on one object

—to see Mary again—living or dead to see Mary again.

At Forty-third street I entered the graveyard where Mary and I had spent our first hour together and saw that even here the waves had done their work. Coffins with their dead had been floated from the graves—skulls and bones were lying scattered in the mud—while over all the more recent dead were festering in the sun.

I passed through the graveyard—callous now to everything—and then began the worst part of my journey. The land was low, and in many places still under water. Through this I had to wade or swim, shoving aside the dead bodies which, entangled in the wreckage, tried to block my way. The day was warm and sultry, and the heat of the sun was beginning to have its effect—decomposition had already begun, and the odor of decay poisoned the air. But nothing, now, could stop me, and in a straight line, over or through all obstacles, I steadily pressed forward.

The sun was declining when, at last, I came in sight of my goal—or not in sight, for where the suburb of Denver Resurvey had once stood, was now nothing but ruins. Only two shells of houses were still standing. I walked to the nearest of these, and, mounting the wall, looked toward the gulf. Even the foundations of Mary's house had disappeared, and the waves were breaking over the spot where it had once stood.

And now, carefully, I began my search. There

were not many bodies to be seen, for most of the dead had been carried out to sea—to be cast back during the next few days in rotting masses on the beach—but each one of those which the wreckage still held, I examined.

The sun had almost set when a shadow crossed my path, and I saw that I was no longer alone—a burly negro was also searching among the dead. A flash of light showed me that he carried an open knife in his hand, but I thought nothing of it until, on looking at a body which he had been near when he first attracted my attention, I saw that one of the fingers had been freshly severed from the hand. Then I understood why he carried a knife—if the swollen fingers of the dead refused to give up their property, he would cut them off.

Something in the horror of this roused me from my apathy. Though, to me, these bodies were nothing, there might be others to whom they were still dear, and he should despoil no more.

I looked up and saw him about fifty yards away just bending over another body, and started towards him.

I was carrying a heavy stick in my hand, which I had used to help me over the piles of wreckage, and I knew that his knife would be nothing against it.

As I drew nearer a ragged skirt told me that the body he was about to rob was that of a woman. He was standing with his back to me, but I could see that he already had her hand in his and was trying

to slip off a ring. It resisted, apparently, for as I came up to him noiselessly over the soft sand he took the knife from his mouth, where he had placed it while moving the body, and, dropping all the fingers except the one with the ring, pressed the knife against the flesh.

It had hardly broken the skin, when the woman started up with a cry—and I saw that she was Mary. He gave an oath, then, still holding her finger with his left hand, raised his right arm as if to strike her.

But the blow never fell; for, more quickly than I could think, I swung my club, and brought it down with all my force upon his head. The skull crushed in and he dropped to the ground. Mary staggered backwards; but before she could fall I had reached her side and caught her. For a moment she stared at me wildly—then a sudden light came in her eyes—a light that I had first seen so many months before—and crying “Graham, Graham,” she threw her arms around my neck and pressed her lips to mine—and then I knew, that, at last, the long struggle was ended.

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